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## EVIDENCE AND ITS FUNCTION ACCORDING TO JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

*By*

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## INTRODUCTION

The problem of evidence as the ultimate criterion of truth and motive of certitude has claimed the attention of most neo-scholastics. Yet there have been few attempts at retracing the concept of evidence to the old Masters. The reason for this is simple enough, since the greater number of modern scholastics have been reared in the Thomistic school of thought. The concept of evidence as an epistemological factor, however, is as yet unknown to St. Thomas. As Geyser<sup>1</sup> observes, the term *evidentia*, as employed by Aquinas, does not have the technical sense of the ultimate source of certitude. Although this connotation is already known to St. Bonaventure,<sup>2</sup> it is with Scotus that it first finds any extensive application.

Scotus' keen interest in the history of thought brings him face to face with the scepticism of the Academicians on the one hand, and with the illuminationism of the Augustinians on the other. Both of these schools agree in denying that man is able to obtain true knowledge with his natural faculties only. While the former despair altogether of arriving at any truth, the latter try to safeguard true knowledge by an appeal to some sort of illumination from on high. Scotus' teaching on evidence as a natural and absolutely secure criterion of truth represents a reaction against both of these extreme positions.

According to Scotus evidence covers the whole range of human knowledge, from the first principles down to sense knowledge. While recognizing the eminent character of the self-evidence proper to first principles, he in no wise limits evidence to them. Contingent knowledge, too, is regulated by evidence. And where the internal or external senses are insufficient to convey certainty, the Franciscan Doctor contrives to save true knowledge by complementing the imperfections of sense knowledge through the superior evidence of the first principles.

1. "Zur Einfuehrung in das Problem der Evidenz in der Scholastik" in *Beitraege zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Supplementband (Muenster, 1923), pp. 174 ff.

2. In 1. *Sent.* dist. 8, p. 1, art. 1, quaest. 2; *Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi, 1882-1902), I, p. 155a.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to present an analysis of Scotus' concept of evidence and a description of its principal applications in the various kinds of knowledge. Many of the particular topics we are to examine have already been treated with more or less detail by other writers. Our modest enterprise, however, seems to be sufficiently justified by the fact that Scotus' doctrine as a whole has never been treated *ex professo* under the specific aspect of evidence.

We do not pretend to give an exhaustive treatment of this important subject. There are a number of interesting problems more or less closely related to our subject which we cannot deal with for lack of space. Thus we must omit the significant question of the function of virtual evidence in Scotus' theory of demonstration, the problem of evidence *in moralibus*, etc.

In an effort to obtain the best possible texts, we have had recourse to several manuscripts. Our quotations from the *Oxford Commentary* are taken in the main from the Assisi manuscript. cod. 137.<sup>3</sup> Occasionally, however, we prefer to quote from the Vivès version<sup>4</sup> in view of certain obscurities and omissions in the mentioned manuscript. In either case the more important variants will be indicated in the form of footnotes. As for the prologue and first book of the Parisian lectures, our basic texts will be taken from the so-called *Reportatio Examinata*, cod. Vienn. 1453, which contains the unedited text authenticated by Scotus himself.<sup>5</sup> The corresponding passages of the Vivès edition will be referred to in all our quotations from both the *Oxonienne* and the *Reportatio*, except when the text is found in the manuscript only. For instance, this reference: *Oxon.* I, d.3, q. 4, fol. 31r, b; n. 5, IX, 168a stands for *Opus Oxoniense*, book

3. Concerning the value of this manuscript cf. C. Balić, O.F.M., *Annua Relatio Commissionis Scotisticae*, II (Rome, 1939-1940), p. 51, note 1: "Codicem A, vel potius patrem ejus, 'Librum' quem Duns Scotus scripserat et dictaverat prae oculis habuisse, ex non paucis notis criticis quas affert, iure meritoque concluditur. Ipse enim centies alias redactiones, 'libros alios' crisi subjicit, pristinum textum, prout in 'Libro Joannis' prostabat, indicando."

4. *Joannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia*, (Paris, 1891-1895).

5. Cf. A. Pelzer, "La grande Reportation examinée avec Jean Duns Scot" in *Annales de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie* V (Louvain 1923), p. 461: "La souscription du copiste, d'après laquelle la grande reportation a été examinée avec Duns Scot, mérite toute créance, à cause de l'âge de l'exemplaire."



I, distinction 3, question 4, *Assisi Ms.*, folium 31 recto, right column; Vivès edition, marginal number 5, volume IX, page 168, left column.

For our translations of the texts from Book I, distinction 3, question 4 of the *Oxoniense* we are indebted to Richard McKeon's *Selections from Medieval Philosophers, II, Roger Bacon to William of Ockham* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1930), pp. 313-350.



PART ONE  
EVIDENCE IS THE FOUNDATION  
OF CERTITUDE

CHAPTER I  
HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE PROBLEM

In this historical survey, be it noted, our attention will be focused almost exclusively on the so-called Augustinian current of thought. This is done in view of the fact that it is this trend of thought with which Scotus most frequently comes to grips when treating the problem of evidence and certitude. The background of his most detailed treatment of this problem is the interpretation given by his illustrious contemporary, Henry of Ghent, to the Augustinian theory of the *rationes aeternae*.<sup>1</sup> This theory, in turn, cannot be grasped in its full significance except in connection with the Platonic doctrine of the Essences. Scotus' own solution to the problem of infallible knowledge of truth, as will be seen, represents a reaction to the opinions of the aforementioned school of thought. Aristotle's views, insofar as they influence Scotus' doctrine, will best be treated in connection with the particular topics where the Franciscan Doctor makes reference to them. We shall therefore set out with Plato's original doctrine of the Essences or Ideas. In the following sections of this chapter we shall consider the Christian version this Platonic theory has been given by St. Augustine and his followers, particularly Henry of Ghent.

A. PLATO'S SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

The search for a criterion of truth has always harassed the human mind. Man, in his inquiry for knowledge, finds no rest until he arrives at a secure criterion by which to measure the value of his knowledge. There have been many attempts to solve this fundamental problem of philosophy. Many of the earlier philosophers, especially Heraclitus and his disciples, despaired altogether of

1. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4; IX, 162a-207b.

obtaining true knowledge. The mutability of all sensible things, on which they so strongly insisted, led them to attach a merely relative value to all human knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

These sceptical views have exercised a permanent influence on the Academy, whose scepticism was so radical and uncompromising that "Academician" and "Sceptic" have become synonymous terms in the history of philosophy. All the Academicians admit is a probable knowledge of truth.<sup>3</sup> However, not all the ancient thinkers deny the possibility of arriving at a certain and infallible knowledge of truth. One of the most ingenious attempts at saving the value of knowledge is that of Plato.

As Geyser puts it,<sup>4</sup> Plato was the first to reach the deep conviction that all thinking and knowing is determined by absolute Essences which exist of themselves. Plato speaks of mathematical, ethical, aesthetical, and ontological Essences, such as Unity and Multiplicity, Straightness and Curvedness, Justice and Wisdom, Beauty and Truth, which are said to be eternal, immutable, and unique, each in its own order. No one can arbitrarily formulate the concepts of these Essences. On the contrary, they regulate the knowledge, not only of man, but even of God Himself. They cannot, therefore, be conceived by anyone, unless by being contacted and intuited by the knowing mind. Thus the Essences appeared to Plato as existing of themselves, and consequently he attributed to them the qualities of eternity, immutability, and uniqueness. Furthermore, it is to the image of these Essences that the divine Demiurgos shapes all sensible things. Since they are the only realities which truly deserve the name of reality, and are for this reason the first cause of all other realities, the Essences must also be considered to be the last and unshakeable basis of knowledge in the proper and strict sense of the word, i.e., of that knowledge which is valid at all times, in all places, and for all men. Plato distinguishes this

2. Cf. E. Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, 13th ed., transl. by L. R. Palmer (London 1948), p. 48.

3. Cf. St. Augustine, *De vita beata*, c. 2, n. 14; *Florilegium Patristicum*, Fasc. XXVII (Bonn, 1931), p. 12.

4. L. Geyser, "Zur Einfuehrung in das Problem der Evidenz in der Scholastik," in *Beitraege zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Supplementband (Muenster 1923), pp. 161-182.



perfect kind of knowledge (Episteme) from that inferior knowledge which produces mere opinion (Doxa).<sup>5</sup>

How do we arrive at this knowledge according to Plato? Is it through abstraction from empirical data? Such an attempt seemed inadequate and absurd to Plato. For the properties of Essences are diametrically opposed to those of the world of experience. First of all they are independent of time, unique, and perfect, whereas empirical data are temporal, manifold, and imperfect. Moreover, things are named according to Essences, precisely because they participate, to a certain degree, in the perfection of Essences. Now it is impossible to know the perfect through the imperfect. But, on the other hand, he who is able to know the perfect can also determine the grade in which it is realized and reproduced in things. For instance, how would I be able to judge beauty or justice in man, unless I knew in advance in what beauty and justice consist? We must be capable, then, of knowing pure and absolute Beauty and Justice as they exist in themselves. Our knowledge of the Essences cannot proceed from the external experience of the senses, or from the internal experience of the activities of our soul. It is had through an immediate and spiritual intuition of the Essences on the part of the mind (*Nous*). This immediate contemplation of the Essences is analogical to that of the act of sensible seeing. The eye, in a sense, apprehends its object immediately with the help of sensible light; hence the analogy. The first condition for sensible seeing is the sun, and this in a threefold aspect. First, the sun gives objects origin, growth, and visibility; secondly, the sun gives the eye, in shaping it, the faculty of seeing; thirdly, the sun gives actual sight to the faculty, by filling the eye with light.

Similarly, there is a supreme fountain of light for intellectual or spiritual knowledge. This is the Idea of Goodness, which for Plato is probably identical with God. Goodness performs a threefold task. First, it gives visibility to the Essences; secondly, the *nous* or human mind receives from it the faculty of intuiting Essences, because of the mind's likeness to Goodness; thirdly, it illumines

5. Geyser, *loc. cit.* Cf. E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen* (Tuebingen, 1859), Zweiter Teil, p. 412 ff.



the mind, enabling it to contemplate the Essences in which Goodness reflects itself. Hence, for Plato, the grasping of the ultimate foundation of knowledge assumes the form of a spiritual intuition of eternal Essences and their relations, through the intervention of a spiritual light which infuses<sup>6</sup> these supra-empirical objects into the soul.

How is certitude of this knowledge to be acquired? Such a question would have appeared ridiculous to Plato. Indeed, what could be clearer or more certain to the mind than what it contemplates in the spiritual light of the Original Sun? No one doubts the existence of an object which is seen in the full light of the material sun. Likewise the described spiritual knowledge of Essences admits of no serious doubts. "Here, then," concludes Geyser,<sup>7</sup> "we have the Platonic concept of evidence. Evidence means for Plato a knowledge which is immediately certain of its truth by reason of the infusion of the eternal Essences into the *nous*."<sup>8</sup>

One of the weak points of Plato's theory is the relation of the Essences to God. Plato's Ideas do not proceed from God, nor do they exist in God. On the other hand, God contemplates them and shapes things according to them. This, however, implies dependence in God, and is therefore, incompatible with a true concept of God. The Neo-Platonists have attempted to correct this weakness of their master's system. Plato himself had shown the way by placing the Idea of Goodness above Being. Plotinus tried to remove God still further from other concepts, in order to safeguard His absolute independence of all things outside of Himself. Hence Plotinus thought it necessary to transfer consciousness and knowledge from the First Being into its immediate derivative, or *Nous*.<sup>9</sup> It is in this *Nous* that Plotinus places the eternal Essences. The derivative of

6. This seems to be the best rendering of Geyser's term "einstrahlen."

7. *Loc. cit.*, p. 166.

8. The above description of Plato's concept of knowledge, as well as the critical remarks that follow, are based mainly on the cited paper of Geyser. Geyser refers expressly only to the *De Republica*. For detailed references to this and other pertinent *Dialogues* vide Zeller, *Die Phil. der Griechen*, pp. 412-457.

9. Plotinus uses the term *Nous*, or thought, to designate the highest of the beings produced by the First Being, while Plato applied the term to the principle of thought in man, i.e., to his soul. Cf. Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 294f.

the *Nous* is the soul, which intuitively grasps the Ideas in its original principle or *Nous*.

More than Plato, Plotinus insists on making *light* the center and origin of all knowledge. The Original or First Light irradiates first the *Nous*, then the soul, then the sun, and finally matter which has no radiation proper to itself. Accordingly Plotinus describes the intuition of eternal Essences by the soul as an effect of the radiation of the Essences (in virtue of their own spiritual light) into the soul.

Plotinus' own theory, however, as is obvious, presents no satisfactory solution to the problems left unsolved by Plato. Essences for him continue to subsist, in a sense, outside of God. It was reserved to the genius of St. Augustine to develop this theory to its highest perfection, and furthermore, to make it compatible with Christian dogma and a true concept of God.<sup>10</sup>

#### B. TRUE AND CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO ST. AUGUSTINE

St. Augustine has dedicated considerable thought and effort to the problem of knowledge and certitude. While rejecting the absolute scepticism of the Academicians, he agrees with them in refusing to make sense-perception the ultimate criterion of true knowledge. He does not reject the value of sense knowledge as such; he even defends it against the Sceptics.<sup>11</sup> According to him the senses deceive us only insofar as we pass uncritically from sense-perception to a judgment that things are exactly as they appear to the senses. If St. Augustine nevertheless shows a certain distrust toward the senses, he leaves no doubt as to the reliability of another source of information, namely of introspection, whose certainty he defends in a remarkable apology against all sorts of Sceptics.<sup>12</sup>

St. Augustine, therefore, does not deny every kind of natural certitude. And yet, throughout the whole of his works he persists in postulating the intervention of a higher authority or *light* which constitutes the ultimate basis of and the indispensable requisite for any exhaustive and infallible knowledge of truth.<sup>13</sup> It was

10. Geyser, *loc. cit.*

11. *De Trinitate*, XV, chap. 12; PL 42, col. 1075.

12. *De Trinitate* XV, chap. 12; PL 42, cols. 1073f.

13. Concerning the relation of this Augustinian "light of the soul" to the tenets of Plato and the Neo-Platonists cf. E. Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1943), pp. 103 ff.



doubtless the inadequacy of our sense perceptions, which is due to the frequent illusions to which the senses fall prey and to the changeableness of all sensible things, that prompted St. Augustine to decide on a solution similar to that of Plato and Plotinus.<sup>14</sup> In fact, St. Augustine's whole theory of knowledge reflects the influence of the Platonic Essences. It is the Essences, or *rationes aeternae*, as St. Augustine calls them, which are the last guarantee of certitude. As a Christian thinker, he could of course not admit of a separate world of thought which exists independently of God. "He decidedly places the eternal Essences and truths in God Himself, Who is for him the First Truth and the repository of all truths."<sup>15</sup> Hence, if we ask St. Augustine for the ultimate foundation of all intellectual knowledge, and of certainty, he answers without hesitation: The foundation of all true knowledge can only be found in the Absolute Truth, or God Himself. He proves this in the following manner:<sup>16</sup> To be able to judge correctly about anything, a norm is required, according to which we may formulate our judgment. No correct judgment about anything is possible, unless there is a norm within us which helps us formulate the judgment. This norm must be absolutely unchangeable, for if it were subject to change, it would not be a reliable rule. Moreover, this rule must be present to our mind. Yet, it cannot be simply identical to the mind, since the mind is mutable, and since we must also judge ourselves and our actions according to that norm. Hence this immutable norm must be above our mind. Since there is nothing immutable and unchangeable but God, it follows that the mentioned norm must be God, the absolute Truth itself.<sup>17</sup>

St. Augustine adduces several other arguments to prove the necessity and the existence of such an absolute rule of knowledge. If someone tells me that he understands this and that, or that he loves one thing and hates another, I accept his statements as true

14. Geyser, *loc. cit.*, p. 167.

15. Geyser, *Ibid.*

16. For the following cf. Gilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 88 ff.; R. Arnou, art. "Platonisme des Pères" in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. XII (Paris, 1935), coll. 2338 ff.

17. *De libero arbitrio*, II, chap. 8; PL 32, cols. 1251 ff.



because of his honesty and veracity. Facts of this kind, however, produce a quite imperfect degree of certitude, since they are warranted only by human authority, and cannot be ascertained through direct observation. But as soon as the speaker leaves the realm of purely personal experience and makes statements about the human mind in general, I can know immediately, and hence can approve of, or disprove of what he states, and this with absolute certainty. St. Augustine concludes that this second kind of knowledge must proceed from a source of truth which is radically different from and absolutely superior to that from which the first knowledge proceeds. Such perfect knowledge as is that which we have of the essence of the soul and of its faculties, he thinks, must be derived from Truth itself.<sup>18</sup> As Prof. Gilson explains, "no matter how great the number of observations by which we may know what men actually are, we cannot deduce from these observations what man should be to answer his own definition."<sup>19</sup> This can only be seen in absolute Truth itself.

The same transcendent principle of truth plays a role in the formation of our judgments about sensible and bodily things. For instance, I have seen the walls of Carthage. Based on this experience, I try to imagine how the walls of Alexandria, which I have not seen, should be. At the same time I am conscious that my memorative image of the walls of Carthage is more perfect than the image my phantasy has of the walls of Alexandria, since the latter have to conform to the former to be true walls. Whence do I know that one image is superior to the other, and that one has to conform to the other to be true? This judgment must be based on some immutable and incorruptible rules which are above the human mind and which direct and guide its thinking: "Viget et claret desuper iudicium veritatis."<sup>20</sup> Hence, the Bishop of Hippo concludes that "when we inwardly approve or disprove something with right, we are convinced that we do it in conformity with other rules that are above our minds, and which remain perfectly unchangeable."

18. *De Trinitate*, IX, chap. 6; PL 42, cols. 965 f.

19. *Op. cit.*, p. 122.

20. *De Trinitate*, IX, chap. 6; PL 42, col. 966.

An analogous process can be observed in our mind when we are appreciating works of art, or studying geometrical figures. When we find ourselves in the presence of a work of art, two images, as it were, come together in our mind. One is the artistic object which impresses its image through the eyes on our imagination. At the same time we contemplate another exemplar according to which the object pleases or displeases us. For this exemplar plays the role of a prototype on which we can measure and evaluate the object before us as to its fidelity of representation. This standard-image, contrary to the first image, is seen by intuition of the rational mind: "Et illam cernimus rationalis mentis intuitu." It enables us to grasp "the ineffably beautiful art of such figures above the perception of the mind by simple intelligence."<sup>21</sup>

Reviewing his preceding considerations, St. Augustine concludes: "Therefore, in that eternal Truth, from which all temporal things proceed, through the vision of the mind we perceive the form according to which we perform anything with true or right reason, whether in ourselves or in outside bodies, and thence we have the true knowledge of things conceived as of a word within us."<sup>22</sup>

A similar thought is expressed by St. Augustine when he comes to speak of the differences between man and brute as to their cognitive powers. Contrary to the brute, man does not receive blindly (*naturaliter*) what comes into the range of his senses and phantasy, but he is in a position to retain consciously and deliberately (*de industria*) the data stored in his memory, and thus prevent them from falling into oblivion. He can combine the data of different perceptions into new images, and of these he can tell whether they are true images, or whether their truth is only one of appearance. For St. Augustine, however, such knowledge of truth is not yet satisfying, because it is based exclusively on mutable, sensible things, and therefore is insufficient for the formation of a sure and stable judgment. "It is of more sublime reason to judge these corporeal things according to incorporeal and eternal reasons," he writes. These alone are above the human mind and have the distinction of

21. *Ibid.*, col. 967.

22. *Ibid.*, chap. 7; col. 967.



immutability. Therefore, although something of our own is always and necessarily associated with cognition of corporeal things, our most certain judgments are ultimately based on "dimensions and figures which the mind knows to remain unchanged."<sup>23</sup> This distinction between true knowledge through sense perception and true knowledge in the *rationes aeternae* rests on the Augustinian distinction between a *ratio superior* and a *ratio inferior* in the soul. Both of these rationes are rational, although the *ratio inferior* is subordinate to the *ratio superior*. It is the privilege of the latter to establish contact with, and to give assent to, intelligible and immutable truth.<sup>24</sup>

St. Augustine explicitly admits the possibility of acquiring knowledge through human agencies. How is this communication of knowledge to be explained? The means of communication of ideas are external and sensible, and therefore insufficient to convey truth. How does it happen that nevertheless we do know the truth of the ideas and propositions transmitted to us by others? The communication of truth can take place only in the light of a higher source of truth, from which both the speaker and the hearer draw their certain knowledge: "If, then, there is the idea of wisdom that you see without my knowing it, and that I can see without your knowing it (and which we therefore cannot show to one another, although it is identical in all of us), this must be due to the fact that the idea is commonly accessible to all of us."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, all truth and certitude comes from on high: "If both of us see the true, you do not see it in me, nor I in you, but both of us in that immutable truth which is above the mind."<sup>26</sup>

From these considerations it follows that in the Augustinian concept of truth and certitude two important factors must be taken into consideration. On the one hand, we have the concepts and propositions known through experience of either the objective, sensible creation, or of our own internal acts. On the other hand,

23. *Ibid.*, XII, chap. 2; col. 999.

24. *Ibid.*, chap. 3. Cf. Gilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 114 f.; Gilson and P. Boehner, O.F.M., *Die Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie* (Paderborn, 1937), p. 178.

25. *De libero arbitrio*, II, chap. 28; PL 32, col. 1256.

26. *Confessiones*, XII, chap. 25; PL 32, col. 840.

there are the divine Ideas with which these natural cognitions must be compared in order that their truth-value may become clear. What the external or internal senses and the reflection upon our mind represent to the inquiring intellect may be in accordance with reality. But the knowledge of such accordance is not the entire truth. Truth is perfect only if and when I reach the conclusion that both the concept of the mind and the object represented by it are in harmony with the Idea which the Creator Himself has of the object. This applies to psychological, aesthetical, mathematical, physical, and ethical concepts and judgments. However high the number of images the senses convey to the mind, however keen our intellectual faculties, we will never be able of ourselves to discover an absolute and necessary truth in any of these cognitions. The ultimate guarantee of truth is not found in any of the purely human factors of knowledge. There is no infallible knowledge of truth except in the light of the divine Ideas, or *rationes aeternae*.

We have exposed St. Augustine's doctrine at considerable length in order that the divergencies between the Augustinian and the Scotistic views may become apparent. True, Scotus frequently tries to reconcile his own doctrine with that of the bishop of Hippo. These efforts to "save the authority" of St. Augustine have led some historians to believe that the Franciscan Doctor still holds to the theory of illumination. Thus Msgr. Grabmann, in one of his later works, lists Scotus among the followers of this theory, along with St. Bonaventure, Walter of Bruges, and Matthew of Aquasparta.<sup>27</sup> In fact, however, Scotus has definitely abandoned the characteristically Augustinian doctrine of a special illumination of the mind by the *rationes aeternae* as a requisite for certain knowledge of truth, and has clearly adopted the main lines of the Aristotelian position.<sup>28</sup> There can be no doubt concerning this point if we keep in mind Scotus' arguments against illuminationism as represented by Henry of Ghent,<sup>29</sup> whose doctrine we shall now proceed to examine.

27. Martin Grabmann, *Die theologische Erkenntnis und Einleitungslehre des heiligen Thomas von Aquin* (Fribourg, 1948), pp. 321 f.

28. Scotus' position regarding the doctrine of illumination is well described by E. Gilson, "Sur quelques difficultés de l'illumination augustinienne" in *Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie*, XXXVI (1934), pp. 321-331.

29. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, nn. 5-6; IX, 168a-170a.



## C. TRUTH AND ILLUMINATION ACCORDING TO HENRY OF GHENT

In the *Opus Oxoniense*, Scotus gives a faithful and very fair account of Henry of Ghent's position.<sup>30</sup> But since in that brief résumé the sequence of the Belgian philosopher's arguments is somewhat changed, we prefer to follow the original order of Henry's *Summa*.<sup>31</sup>

Henry of Ghent may be considered one of the last great Illuminationists. Although well acquainted with Aristotle's doctrines, he refuses to accept the Aristotelian theory of abstraction as a basis for true knowledge through the natural powers of the intellect. In his *Summa* Henry defines true knowledge as the knowledge of the conformity of the thing known with its exemplar.<sup>32</sup> He distinguishes two kinds of true knowledge, one which can be obtained naturally, and another which can be had only with the help of the "divine Light." The former extends only to "that which the thing is" (*id quod res est*), and is obtained through the senses and the simple intelligence. The senses can be said to be true inasmuch as they apprehend things as they are in themselves. Likewise, simple intellectual apprehension is true inasmuch as it shows things as they are. Henry remarks, however, that this first apprehension of the intellect is not sufficient to make the truth of the thing known. This is due to the intellect and to the thing itself. To the intellect, because it does not apprehend truth formally in the stage of simple intellection, formal truth being present only in compositions and divisions, i.e., in affirmative and negative judgments; to the thing itself, because to be is one thing, to be true is another (though these two things are always found together). Indeed, being, which is the first *intentio comprehensibilis*, can be grasped by the intellect regardless of other *intentiones*, due to its absolute nature. The *intellectio veritatis* of a thing, however, implies the apprehension of the relation of the thing to its exemplar or original idea. Hence perfect truth (*sincera veritas*) cannot be apprehended unless the conformity of the thing with its exemplar be apprehended as well.

30. *Ibid.*, nn. 2-4; 163a-165a.

31. Art. I, quaest. II et III (Paris, 1620), fol. III verso - XI recto.

32. Art. I, quaest. II, fol. V r, D. Cf. J. Paulus, "Henri de Gand et l'argument ontologique" in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, X (1936), pp. 269 ff.

According to Plato,<sup>33</sup> there is a double exemplar. One exists in the soul and is caused by things; the other is found in God, or, better, in the ideal reasons He has of all things.<sup>34</sup>

The first of the two mentioned exemplars, viz., that which is abstracted from things, permits the truth of the thing to be known to some degree, i.e., when the mind forms actual concepts which correspond to the exemplar which is already in the soul. These are Aristotle's universal concepts. By means of these, Aristotle maintains that we are able to know the truth of things, not excluding natural and mutable things. Thus with the help of a universal notion acquired through observation of various species of animals, we are in a position to decide about anything we see, whether it is an animal or not. Likewise, through the specific concept of a donkey, we can judge of any animal whether it is a donkey or not.<sup>35</sup>

Henry maintains against Aristotle that it is impossible with such abstracted exemplars to arrive at any infallible knowledge of truth. And this for a threefold reason. Firstly, there is no certain cognition of truth unless it be had under the aspect of immutability. The thing from which the exemplar is abstracted is subject to change. Therefore it cannot be the cause of certain cognition of truth. In support of his opinion Henry quotes St. Augustine, who writes that "pure truth is not found in sensible things,"<sup>36</sup> because sensible things change continually.<sup>37</sup>

33. We have not been able to locate Henry's reference to Plato. His words seem to be a rather general statement of the interpretation given to Plato's doctrine of the Ideas in the Middle Ages.

34. *Summa*, art. I, q. II; fol. Vr, E: "Primum exemplar rei est species ejus universalis apud animam existens, per quam acquirit notitiam omnium suppositorum ejus, et est causata a re. Secundum exemplar est ars divina continens omnium rerum ideales rationes, ad quod Plato dicit Deum mundum instituisse, sicut artifex ad exemplar artis in mente sua facit domum."

35. *Ibid.*, fol. V v, E: "Unde per universalem notitiam quam in nobis habemus acquisitam de diversis speciebus animalis, cognoscimus de qualibet re quae nobis occurrit an sit animal an non; et per specialem notitiam asini cognoscimus de quolibet quod nobis occurrit an sit asinus an non."

36. *Liber LXXXIII Quaestionum*, quaest. 9; PL 40, col. 13.

37. *Summa*, loc. cit.: "Sed quod per tale exemplar acquisitum in nobis habeatur certa omnino et infallibilis notitia veritatis, hoc omnino est impossibile triplici ratione quorum prima sumitur ex parte rei de qua exemplar hujusmodi abstractum est...quia res naturales magis sunt transmutabiles quam mathematicae....Unde hanc



Secondly, the soul as such cannot be rectified nor prevented from erring by something more mutable than the soul itself. The exemplars of sensible things, however, are more mutable than the soul. Therefore these exemplars cannot prevent the soul from erring.<sup>38</sup> This again is said to be the opinion of St. Augustine when he writes: "Since the law of all arts is absolutely immutable, and since the human mind, to which it has been permitted to see such a law, can suffer the mutability of error, it is sufficiently apparent that there is above our mind a law which is called truth."<sup>39</sup>

Thirdly, no one has a certain and infallible knowledge of truth, unless he has that by which he can distinguish what is true from what is only apparently true. Indeed, if he cannot distinguish truth from falsity or from apparent truth, he can doubt whether he is deceived. Such a discernment, however, is not attainable by means of the created exemplar alone. Consequently it cannot give an infallible knowledge of truth. The minor premise of this syllogism can be thus proved. An abstracted species can represent itself as itself, i.e., as a mere representation, or can represent itself as object. If it represents itself as object, as is often the case in dreams, it is a false representation; if as itself, it is a true representation. Since there is nothing in the abstracted species which could show with sufficient distinctness whether it merely represents itself as itself, or whether it appears as real object, it follows that no distinction between truth and falsity is possible by means of the species alone.<sup>40</sup>

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causam incertitudinis scientiae rerum naturalium ex sensibilibus acceptam Augustinus pertractans LXXXIII, q. IX dicit quod a sensibus corporis non est expectanda sincera veritas."

38. *Ibid.*: "Secunda ratio est quod anima humana quia mutabilis est et erroris passiva, per nihil quod mutabilitatis aequalis vel majoris est cum ipsa potest rectificare ne obliquetur per errorem et in rectitudine veritatis persistat. Igitur omne exemplar quod recipit a rebus naturalibus, cum sit inferioris gradus naturae quam ipsa, necessario aequalis vel majoris mutabilitatis est cum ipsa. Non ergo potest eam rectificare ut persistat in infallibili veritate."

39. *De vera religione*, ch. 30; PL 34, col. 147: "Lex omnium artium cum sit omnino incommutabilis, mens vero humana, cui talem legem videre concessum est, mutabilitatem pati possit erroris, satis apparet supra mentem nostram esse legem quae veritas dicitur."

40. *Summa*, loc. cit.: "Tertia ratio est quod huiusmodi exemplar cum sit intentio et species sensibilis rei abstracta a phantasmate similitudinem habet cum falso

Having rejected the abstracted species as a means of arriving at perfect and certain knowledge, Henry concludes that we must take recourse to the eternal exemplar, i.e., to the eternal reasons or ideas in God. This does not mean that Henry makes God Himself the direct object of our knowledge in the present state of life. God, he says, is simply the *ratio cognoscendi*. He explains his meaning by comparing intellectual knowledge with the process of sensible seeing, which for him is parallel to the intellectual contemplation of "sincere" or perfect truth. As in sensible seeing the eye must be illumined and "sharpened" by natural light,<sup>41</sup> so in the process of intellectual "seeing" the mind must be illumined and sharpened by Divine Light. Just as natural light, by shining upon colors, enables the bodily eye to perceive the objects, so Divine Light by illumining the species of the objects, enables the spiritual eye of the mind to know the *sincera veritas*, or perfect truth of things. This seeing of truth "in God" is to be taken in this sense: God impresses on the human mind the exemplars of things as they are in his own intellect. By virtue of these exemplars we are in a position to know the perfect truth of things, according to their conformity with the eternal and perfect exemplars of the same things.<sup>42</sup>

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sicut cum vero. Ita quod quantum est ex parte sua internosci non potest; per eandem enim imagines sensibilibus in somno et in furore iudicamus imagines esse res ipsas: et in vigilia sani iudicamus de ipsis rebus. Veritas autem sincera non percipitur nisi discernendo eam a falso; igitur per tale exemplar impossibile est certam haberi scientiam et certam notitiam veritatis." Our exposition follows Scotus' own formulation of Henry's argument. Scotus' text reads: "Notitiam veritatis certam et infallibilem nullus habet, nisi habeat unde possit verum discernere a verisimili; quia si non possit discernere verum a falso vel a verisimili, potest dubitare se falli: sed per exemplar praedictum creatum non potest discerni verum a verisimili; ergo, etc. Probatio minoris: talis species potest repraesentare se tamquam se, vel alio modo se tamquam objectum, sicut est in somniis. Si repraesentet se tamquam objectum, falsitas est: si se tamquam se, veritas est; igitur per talem speciem non habetur sufficiens distinctivum, quando repraesentat se ut se, vel ut objectum, et ita nec sufficiens distinctivum veri a falso" (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, fol. 31 r, a; n. 3, IX, 163b s.).

41. *Summa*, art. I, quaest. III; fol. IX r, B: "Primum illorum quae requiruntur in visu corporali est lux illuminans organum *ad acuendum*." Note how this concept of "light" as taken over from Plato, runs through the Augustinian school. Cf. Gilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 103 ff.

42. *Ibid.*, fol. IX v, F: "Sic autem illuminat secundum communem huius vitae statum ad cognoscendum synceram veritatem rerum: primo diffundendo se super



From these considerations, according to Henry of Ghent, it follows that perfect truth is obtained with the help of a twofold exemplar or species, one taken from the thing itself,<sup>43</sup> the other from the Divine Intellect. These two exemplary species, by coming together in the mind, enable it to know perfect truth through comparison of the created or acquired species of the thing with the infused species or divine exemplar which represents the perfect image of what the created object is, or should be.

Scotus takes position toward the exposed doctrine of illuminationism in a special question of the *Opus Oxoniense*.<sup>44</sup> After a concise exposition of Henry of Ghent's views he proceeds to show that illuminationism gives no satisfactory explanation of true knowledge. Far from saving truth and certitude, the postulation of a special illumination from on high leads to the opposite extreme, namely, to universal doubt and absolute scepticism. These criticisms of Scotus constitute the subject matter of the following chapter.

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species rerum, et ab illis in mentem ad formandum in ipso intellectu perfectum conceptum de re ipsa, ad modum quo lux corporalis primo diffundit se super colorem ad informandum visum perfectum oculi. Et ita sicut color est motivum visus secundum actum lucidi corporalis, sic res quaelibet intelligibilis per suam speciem est motivum visus mentis ad syncerae veritatis cognitionem secundum actum lucidi spiritualis."

43. It follows that illumination is not required to furnish the elements of knowledge. It only enables the mind to a better and more penetrating knowledge. Cf. Paulus, *loc. cit.*, p. 274.

44. Book I, d. 3, q. 4; IX, 162a-207b.

## CHAPTER II

### ILLUMINATIONISM IS NOT THE BASIS OF CERTITUDE

Scotus' point of departure in discussing the problem of certitude is the weakness in Henry of Ghent's interpretation of St. Augustine. He shows first of all that far from saving the certitude of human knowledge, Henry's views lead to absolute scepticism. The gist of Henry's first objection to certain knowledge through our unassisted natural faculties can be had in the following line of reasoning. Any certain knowledge presupposes an unchangeable object. All things are changeable. Consequently, there is no certain knowledge of things, unless a special illumination be admitted.

Scotus argues back by saying that recourse to illumination is of no avail to safeguard the certainty of knowledge under the presuppositions of Henry's system. Indeed, a changeable thing cannot be represented as unchangeable. If it could be, it would no longer be known in its true nature. Hence there is no certitude in the cognition of a mutable thing as immutable:

*Istae rationes videntur concludere impossibilitatem cunctae cognitionis naturalis. Puta quia si objectum continue mutatur, nec potest haberi aliqua certitudo de ipso sub ratione immutabilis, imo nec in quocumque lumine posset certitudo haberi, quia non est certitudo quando objectum alio modo cognoscitur quam se habet; igitur nec est certitudo cognoscendo mutabile ut immutabile. (Oxon. I, d. 3, q. 4, fol. 31 r, b; Vivès ed., *ibid.*, n. 5, vol. IX, p. 168, col. a).*

As Messner points out,<sup>1</sup> Henry of Ghent's position is vitiated by a radical dissonance between our thought-contents which are immutable, and things which are mutable. If the condition of unchangeable and true knowledge were to be looked for in the immutability of objects, then we would never be in a position to pass immutably true judgments on contingent things.

Scotus also shows that Henry's supposition itself is false and that it does not give St. Augustine's doctrine, but rather that of Heraclitus and his disciple Cratylus. The Heracliteans maintained,

1. R. Messner, O.F.M., *Schauendes und begriffliches Erkennen nach Duns Scotus* (Freiburg, 1942), pp. 208E.



according to Aristotle, that the whole world of nature is in continual movement, and that therefore no true statement can be made about anything. Cratylus drove this view to the extreme by refusing to say anything, because at the moment in which a proposition is uttered, the thing might have undergone a new change and the statement no longer be true:<sup>2</sup>

Patet etiam quod antecedens hujus rationis videlicet quod sensibilia continue mutantur, falsum est; haec est enim opinio, quae imponitur Heraclito 4. *Metaphysicae* (*ibid.*).

Even if we granted Henry's assumption that all things are mutable, there would be at least one certain and immutable truth, viz., the fact that all things are continually changing. This argument was already used by Aristotle against the extravagant opinions of the Heracliteans. Not everything is changing in nature, and hence we are in no way limited to such imperfect knowledge. Aristotle concedes that we can make no true statement about a thing precisely insofar as it is changing; yet he maintains that even in changing things there must be an element of constancy: "For that which is losing a quality has something of that which is being lost, and of that which is coming to be, something must already be. And in general if a thing is perishing, there will be present something that exists; and if a thing is coming to be, there must be something from which it comes to be and something by which it is generated, and this process cannot go on *ad infinitum*."<sup>3</sup> And a little further we read: "Grant that in quantity a thing is not constant; still it is in respect of its form that we know each thing." When applied to the present problem, the Aristotelian reasoning serves to show that in spite of changing appearances the possibility of unchangeable, and therefore certain, knowledge can be saved. For in virtue of their unchanging nature even accidentally mutable things can produce, and produce in fact, immutable knowledge in our minds:

Non sequitur etiam: si objectum est mutabile, igitur quod gignitur ab eo non est repraesentativum alicujus sub ratione immutabilis; quia mutabilitas in objecto non est ratio gignendi, sed natura ipsius objecti quod est mutabile, vel quia natura est immutabilis; genitum igitur ab ipsa repraesentat naturam per se....(*loc. cit.*, f. 32 r, a-b; Viv. n. 13, 181b).

2. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV, ch. 5; 1010a 6-14.

3. *Ibid.*, 1010a 15-25.

Lychetus<sup>4</sup> remarks that this text must be interpreted in the light of Scotus' teaching on the intelligible species. The Franciscan Doctor maintains that universal knowledge is impossible unless the intellect possesses a species of its own.<sup>5</sup> The sensible species alone does not account for universal concepts, since it is totally caused by the singular object. In order that an object be known under the aspect of universality another species must be admitted which is not produced by the object or the species in the phantasy as by its total cause, but by the object together with the agent intellect, as two partial causes. This is the so-called intelligible species. The universality of such a species is due to the fact that the *ratio gignendi* is not the singularity of the sensible object, but its nature. The intelligible species which is the common effect of the two mentioned causes is similar to the object, not because it proceeds from *this object*, but because the object has *this nature*. The intelligible species, therefore, owes its origin, not to the singular as singular, but to the nature in which the singular participates:

Cum ergo accipitur quod quaecumque species gignitur ab aliquo representat ipsum secundum illam rationem secundum quam gignitur ab eo, si intelligatur de ratione gignentis falsa est; si de ratione gignendi, concedi potest; et tunc non sequitur quod representat ipsum sub ratione singularis, sed sub ratione naturae, quia ratio naturae est ratio gignendi (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 6, f. 35 v, b; *Viv.* n. 15, IX, 255b).

From this text we can safely draw the conclusion that since objects remain unchanged in nature, the intelligible species which proceeds from the immutable nature can never produce a false cognition.

Messner tries to give a more acceptable interpretation to the meaning of *natura* in this text. He comes to the conclusion that, whether Scotus refers to the common nature as something immutable and opposed to the *haecceitas* as something mutable, or to the constant nucleus (*Kern*) which remains while the appearances come and go, neither of the two alternatives is entirely satisfactory. For this would seem to imply that only those judgments about reality would be immutably true which are concerned with that unchangeable nucleus. This Messner refuses to admit, for the knowledge of a

4. *Commentary*, n. 21; *Vivès* edition IX, pp. 184a f.

5. Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 6 *passim*; IX, 232a-335a.



passing event, he maintains, can very well remain immutably true.<sup>6</sup>

Needless to say, we fully agree with Messner that there is such a thing as a true and constant cognition of passing and past facts. But on the other hand, we think that Scotus does not deny what Messner would make us believe he denies, or at least calls in doubt. It should be kept in mind that in the text under discussion Scotus is fighting off an objection. It is unlikely that he would determine the whole course of his theory of knowledge in such a place, as Messner thinks he does.<sup>7</sup> For in answering an objection one does generally not say more than what is needed to invalidate the arguments of the opponent. Hence, what is said in such circumstances does not necessarily express the whole of one's own convictions. Moreover, in the present place, Scotus, to all appearances, is treating of abstractive knowledge, as is clear from such expressions as *repraesentat* and *exemplar*, which can only refer to cognition through a species. The latter is precisely what characterizes abstractive knowledge, in opposition to intuitive cognition.<sup>8</sup> As Day points out, abstractive knowledge is a cognition "in which the agent intellect abstracts the *species* of quiddity from the *species* in the phantasm; this *species* represents the object absolutely, without any reference to actual existence in time and location in place." Intuitive knowledge is a cognition "in which the object is apprehended precisely as present to the observer here and now - i.e., not absolutely (which means from the quidditative aspect alone) but existentially. This kind of cognition "co-operates" with the intellect in the causation of a habit in the intellect and, as a result of this co-operation, a habitual intuitive cognition is caused in the *intellective* memory. This habitual intuitive cognition does not regard the object in its absolute quidditative aspect any more than the initial perfect intuitive cognition does; it regards the known object existentially - i.e., with the qualification that it *was* existing when

6. *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

7. "Ist es zweckmaessig, die Lehre vom unwandelbaren Kern an die Spitze der Erkenntnislehre zu setzen? Ist es richtig, diese Lehre als Bedingung der Erkenntnissicherung ueberhaupt zu betrachten?" *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

8. Cf. also *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 6, n. 16; IX, 356a.

it was apprehended in the past."<sup>9</sup> In other words, what is said of the mode of abstractive knowledge does not necessarily apply to intuitive cognition. In the latter, as the text just cited indicates, Scotus does not demand any degree of immutability, contrary to what he demands of abstractive cognition. The aforementioned "habitual intuitive cognition" of things past, it seems, is a sufficient indication that a true and certain knowledge of contingent past events is admitted, even under the assumption that they no longer exist or that they have been subject to change.

Another argument Scotus adduces against Henry of Ghent is that even mutable things can make something known under the aspect of immutability. That this is not impossible is shown with the help of an analogy taken from Natural Theology. We know that God is immutable, and this not through an immediate contact with God himself, but through the knowledge of natural things which are continually changing:

Patet etiam quod repraesentativum in se mutabile potest repraesentare aliquid sub ratione immutabilis, quia essentia Dei sub ratione immutabilis repraesentatur intellectui per aliquid omnino mutabile, sive illud sit species sive actus (*Oxon.* I, a. 3, q. 4, f. 32 r, b; *Viv.* n. 13, IX, 182a). The same is illustrated by a simile. Finite things can and do represent something under the aspect of infinity:

Hoc patet per simile, quia per finitum potest repraesentari aliquid sub ratione infiniti (*ibid.*).

For instance, the species produced in the intellect by a finite object represents the same object somehow under an infinite aspect. For the species does not represent a single object but can stand indifferently for any object of the same kind. As Lychetus remarks,<sup>10</sup> the intelligible species represents the object *in ratione intelligibilis*, i.e., under its essential aspect, which is not the exclusive property of any individual thing, but can pertain to an unlimited number of objects.

Henry of Ghent's second objection against certain natural knowledge appeals to the mutability of the species. The images of

9. Sebastian F. Day, *Intuitive Cognition a Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1947), pp. 80 f.

10. *Commentary* n. 25; IX, 225b. Vide also Messner, *op. cit.*, pp. 349 ff.



sensible things, he thinks, are unfit to produce true knowledge, since they are more mutable than the soul itself.<sup>11</sup>

Scotus brings out the weakness of this argument in the following reasoning. If all which is in the soul is said to be mutable, it follows that the act of understanding itself is mutable, and thus nothing at all is found in the soul by which it could be corrected or prevented from error. Not even the assumption of the Eternal Light is of any assistance. For its influence, if it is to enlighten the human mind at all, must evidently exert itself somehow through the intellectual faculty. But since mutability extends to the intellectual act itself it is clear that the only means that could have saved certain knowledge becomes entirely ineffective:

Similiter, si propter mutabilitatem exemplaris quod est in anima nostra non posset esse certitudo, cum quidquid ponitur in anima subjective sit mutabile, etiam ipse actus intelligendi erit mutabilis et ita<sup>12</sup> sequitur quod per nihil in anima rectificatur anima ne erret. Sequitur etiam quod ipse actus intelligendi cum sit mutabilior quam ipsa anima in qua est, nunquam erit verus nec veritatem continebit.<sup>13</sup> (*Ibid.*, f. 31 r, b; Viv. n. 5, 168a f.).

Henry's attempt to save true knowledge by the concurrence or agreement of two exemplars, one proceeding from the sensible object and the other infused by the Eternal Light, is also doomed to failure. Logic tells us that from two premises, one of which is contingent and one necessary, only a contingent conclusion can be drawn. Similarly in the process of cognition, if one element which is certain is combined with another that is uncertain, no certain conclusion follows:

Similiter secundum istam opinioinem, species creata inhaerens concurrir cum specie illabente; sed quando aliquid concurrir quod repugnat certitudini, non potest certitudo haberi; sicut enim ex altera de necessario et altera de contingenti non sequitur conclusio nisi de contingenti, ita ex certo et incerto concurrentibus ad aliquam cognitionem non sequitur cognitio certa (*ibid.*).

Scotus holds to a middle course regarding this question of the mutability of the soul. The soul is not absolutely immutable, nor is it altogether mutable. It is immutable in its nature, and mutable

11. *Supra*, p. 24.

12. Erit mutabilis et ita *add. Viv.*

13. Sequitur etiam.../ *om. Viv.*

insofar as its habits and acts are concerned. In the latter a double mutability is distinguished - one from a privation to a quality, e.g., from ignorance to knowledge; another from one contrary to the other, e.g., from correctness to deception and vice-versa. The soul is, and always remains, immutable in the first sense, i.e., in its nature. Regarding the second kind of mutability, a change can take place only in the case of propositions which are not known in virtue of their terms. Concerning propositions known in virtue of their terms (*propositiones per se notae*, self-evident propositions), the mind can never err, because the apprehended terms are both a necessary and evident cause of the conformity of the proposition to the terms themselves:

Ad secundam dico, quod in anima potest intelligi duplex mutabilitas, una ab affirmatione in negationem et e converso, puta ab ignorantia ad scientiam, vel a non intellectione ad intellectionem. Alia quasi a contrario in contrarium, puta a rectitudine in deceptionem vel e converso. Ad quaecumque autem objecta est mutabilis anima prima mutabilitate, et per nihil formaliter in ea existens tollitur ab ea talis mutabilitas; sed non est mutabilis secunda mutabilitate nisi circa illa complexa, quae non habent evidentiam ex terminis. Circa illa vero quae sunt evidentia ex terminis mutari non potest secunda mutabilitate, quia ipsi termini apprehensi sunt causa necessaria et evidens conformitatis conformis compositionis factae ad ipsos terminos<sup>14</sup> (*loc. cit.* f. 32r, b; n. 14, 182a).

Hence, although, absolutely speaking, the soul may fall into error after it has been in the possession of truth, it by no means follows that it cannot be corrected. For there are propositions about which the intellect never errs, once it apprehends the meaning of their terms:

Ergo si anima est mutabilis a rectitudine in errorem absolute, non sequitur quod per nihil aliud a se potest rectificari; saltem rectificari potest circa illa objecta, circa quae non potest intellectus errare apprehensis terminis (*ibid.*; 182a f.).

In his third objection Henry of Ghent says that certain knowledge is impossible without a special illumination because we cannot always distinguish between objects and mere images of objects.<sup>15</sup> Scotus shows that this argument is inconsistent with Henry's own doctrine of knowledge. The Belgian philosopher admits the need of a species abstracted from the thing as a condition for knowledge.

14. Causa necessaria conformitatis compositionis ad ipsos terminos *Viv.*

15. *Supra*, p. 24.



Now, if we are unable to decide whether such a species represents itself as itself or as object, Scotus reasons, then we will never be in a position to discern the true from the mere appearance of truth, no matter by how many higher *rationes* the species may be accompanied:

Item patet etiam de tertia ratione, quia si species ipsa abstracta a re concurrat ad omnem cognitionem, et non potest judicari quando illa repraesentat se tamquam se et quando se tamquam objectum, ergo quantumcumque aliud concurrat, non potest haberi certitudo per quam discernatur verum a verisimili (*loc. cit.*, f. 31 r, b; n. 5, 168b).

Henry's objection, Scotus remarks, would be valid against the theory which denies the intelligible species and maintains that the phantasm alone is sufficient to fulfill the role attributed by common opinion to the intelligible species. It is the species in the phantasy, the Franciscan Doctor points out, that is sometimes mistaken for the real object in dreams, for the activity of the phantasy is not suspended during sleep. The intelligible species, however, cannot be the object of such a mistake, for the intellect cannot operate with the mentioned species unless it is adequately disposed. In the state of sleep, however, this condition is absent. It follows that, since Scotus admits the existence in the mind of intelligible species, Henry's argument does not touch his position:

Ad tertiam dico quod si aliquam apparentiam haberet, magis concluderet contra opinionem illam quae negat speciem intelligibilem, quia illa species quae potest repraesentare se tamquam objectum in somniis, esset phantasma, non species intelligibilis; igitur si intellectus solo phantasmate utatur per quod objectum est sibi praesens, et non alia specie intelligibili, non videtur quod per aliquod in quo objectum sibi relucet, posset discernere verum a verisimili. Sed ponendo speciem in intellectu non valet ratio, quia intellectus non potest uti illa pro se ut pro objecto, quia non contingit uti illa in dormiendo (*loc. cit.* f. 32r, b; n. 14; 182b).

In the *Commentary on Metaphysics* we find a text where Scotus considers the role of the species from a somewhat different angle. In the passage just quoted from the *Oxoniense* he describes the function of species in unconscious and abnormal states, as opposed to conscious and normal states. In the *Metaphysics* he draws a distinction between the species which proceeds from a present object and that which is only in the imagination. Someone had

argued<sup>16</sup> against the reliability of sense-perception that according to St. Augustine the senses never perceive whether they are subject to the action of a real object, or of a mere species or image of an object. For this reason, the objector maintained, we can expect no certain truth from the senses. A faculty of apprehension which cannot distinguish between a true and a false object (i.e., between a real and an apparent object) is unable to produce true knowledge in the mind.

Scotus answers that the species by which we apprehend the objects cannot prevent the senses from distinguishing whether an object is present or not present.<sup>17</sup> This is especially true with regard to the particular senses (as opposed to the common sense). For these do not retain the species of absent objects. The mentioned illusion, therefore, cannot take place with regard to particular senses:

Unde ad rationes illas, ut sunt rationes, dicendum quod nec sensibilia omnia continue moventur secundum omnia, nec ita imprimuntur species, ut ab ipsis phantasmatis non possit discerni quando obiectum est praesens, et quando non, praecipue de sensu particulari, qui non tenet speciem in absentia sensibilis. (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 24; VII, 65a).

In fact, a sense-perception is had only of a present object. A sense-perception, therefore, always indicates the presence of a real object, whereas the absence of sense-perception indicates the absence of the object.<sup>18</sup> A more detailed discussion of the problems of sense-perception will be given in the third part of our dissertation, where we shall also consider the remaining points of Scotus' refutation of Henry of Ghent's third objection.<sup>19</sup>

Returning to the fundamental position of his opponent, Scotus tries to obviate his contentions, by examining the nature of what

16. *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, lib. I, q. 4, n. 2; VII, 51b f.

17. What Scotus wants to say is, obviously, that the intellect is able to decide, through the service of the senses, whether an object is, or not, present.

18. Cf. Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot" in *Archives d'hist. doctr. et litt. du m. â.*, II (1927), p. 119: "Si l'on s'en tient surtout aux sens particuliers, comme la vue ou l'ouïe, et abstraction faite du sens commun, chaque sens distingue fort nettement la sensation que provoque la présence d'un objet réel, de l'absence de sensation qui résulte de l'absence d'un tel objet."

19. Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, nn. 14-15; IX, 182b ff.



Henry calls *veritas certa et sincera*, and by proving that whatever definition or description of this "certain and sincere truth" is proffered, a recourse to a special illumination is either superfluous or impracticable. Three different meanings can be connected with the expression just mentioned. Firstly, it may be taken in the sense of infallible truth, i.e., of a knowledge which excludes every doubt and deception. That we can obtain such knowledge by purely natural means has been proved in the second and third articles of question under discussion:<sup>20</sup>

Circa quantum articulum contra conclusionem opinionis arguo sic: Quaero quid intelligit per veritatem certam et sinceram, aut veritatem infallibilem, absque dubitatione scilicet et deceptione, et probatum est prius et declaratum in articulo secundo et tertio quod illa potest haberi ex puris naturalibus (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 32 v, a; n. 16, IX, 185b).

Secondly, the expression *veritas certa et sincera* may be understood in the sense of a property of being (*passio entis*). If this is Henry's meaning he must admit that truth can be known naturally. For he states explicitly that we are able to know being naturally.<sup>21</sup> Hence, Scotus argues, we must also be in a position to know the qualities or properties coextensive with being, such as *true* (*verum*). It also follows that if *true* can be known as a property of being, then its abstract or *truth* (*veritas*) can also be known naturally:

Aut intelligit de veritate quae est passio entis, et tunc cum ens possit naturaliter intelligi, ergo et verum ut est passio ejus; et si verum, igitur et veritas per abstractionem, quae quia quaecumque forma potest intelligi ut in subjecto, potest intelligi ut in se et in abstracto a subjecto (*ibid.*).

Thirdly, the expression may be taken in the sense of conformity with an exemplar. This exemplar, according to Scotus, is either created or uncreated. If it is created there will be no doubt that truth can be known. If an uncreated exemplar is meant, and the knowledge of truth is made dependent on the apprehension of the conformity of things with such an exemplar, then it is clear that true knowledge cannot be arrived at unless this exemplar itself is first known. For a relation is unintelligible without a previous knowledge of both extremes. It is unthinkable that the eternal ex-

20. For our treatment of these texts cf. *infra*, Part II, Chaps. I-III.

21. *Supra*, p. 22.

emplar be the *ratio cognoscendi*, though unknown in itself, as is maintained by Henry:<sup>22</sup>

Aut alio modo intelligit per veritatem conformitatem ad exemplar; et si ad creatum, patet propositum; si autem ad exemplar increatum, conformitas ad illud non potest intelligi nisi in illo exemplari cognito, quia relatio non est cognoscibilis nisi cognito extremo; ergo falsum est quod ponitur exemplar aeternum esse rationem cognoscendi et non cognitum (*loc. cit.*, 185b f.).

#### SCOTUS REJECTS EVERY FORM OF ILLUMINATION

Scotus, contrary to Henry of Ghent, does not limit man's natural and unassisted faculties to knowing the *verum*, or that which is true. He holds that *veritas*, or certain and infallible truth, is also accessible to man. In other words, man's knowledge is not restricted to the imperfect apprehension of truth, such as it is had in simple apprehension. He is also able to know with absolute certainty the truth of many judgments, such as the first principles and other propositions. Scotus proves this by taking Henry's concession of a *confusa cognitio* of the *verum* as a starting-point. What can be known *confuse* can also be known *definitive*. In other words, unclear concepts can be made clear and distinct with the help of definitions. This is done by the simple intellect through the method of division. The distinct knowledge of concepts thus arrived at is the highest and most perfect cognition accessible to the simple intellect. Once the latter has seized these concepts, the *intellectus componens* is in a position to formulate certain basic principles, as well as any number of conclusions that can be drawn from the principles. It would seem, Scotus adds, that the knowledge of these principles constitutes the very peak of perfection in intellectual knowledge. For it renders superfluous any other mode of knowing the same truths. The certitude of the principles is so absolute that no intervention of an uncreated Light is needed to further convince us. The cognitions which we are able to acquire in this manner are fully sufficient in the realm of natural knowledge:

Intellectus simplex omne quod intelligit confuse potest cognoscere definitive, inquirendo definitionem illius cogniti per viam divisionis. Haec cognitio definitiva videtur perfectissima pertinens ad intellectum

22. *Supra*, p. 25.



simplicem; ex tali autem cognitione perfectissima terminorum potest intellectus perfectissime intelligere principium, et ex principio conclusionem, et in hoc compleri videtur notitia intellectus, ita quod non videtur cognitio veritatis necessaria ultra veritates praedictas (*loc. cit.*, 186a).

Scotus then presents a detailed refutation of the various interpretations of which Henry's illuminationism is susceptible. At the same time he proves that any kind of knowledge allegedly obtained through illumination can be had by man's unassisted natural faculties. In his criticisms Scotus bases himself on the inconsistencies of Henry's own expositions.

Henry refuses to admit an infusion or substantial communication of any kind of "Uncreated Light" into the human soul. Furthermore, he rejects immediate and direct contemplation of truth in the Divine Intellect on the part of man. Hence Scotus concludes that the influence of Divine Light is necessarily accidental in character. In other words, it must be a real accident, which is either prior to the act of understanding or concomitant with it. If illumination is prior to the act, the Uncreated Light must create a convenient disposition, either in the objective concept, i.e., in the object as it exists in the intellect, or in the intellectual faculty itself. In the first case it would seem that Scotus is thinking of Henry's concept of the *verum* which is had in the act of simple intelligence and which remains imperfect until through illumination the *sincera veritas* itself is apprehended.<sup>23</sup> This, however, is impossible, Scotus objects, because concepts do not belong to the real but to the intentional order, and therefore can never be modified by real accidents:

Aut lux aeterna quam dicis necessariam ad habendam sinceram veritatem causat aliquid prius naturaliter actu, aut non. Si sic, aut igitur in objecto, aut in intellectu. Non in objecto, quia objectum in quantum habet esse in intellectu non habet esse reale, sed tantum intentionale; igitur non est capax alicujus accidentis realis (*ibid.*).

If the said disposition is placed in the intellectual faculty, it likewise follows that the cognition of infallible truth is brought about by means of an accidental effect of the Uncreated Light. To this theory, which implies an intervention of the Divine Light before each and every new act of knowledge, Scotus opposes what he calls

23. *Supra*, pp. 21 f.

the common opinion. For the latter accounts in a much more satisfactory manner for the knowledge of truth. The common opinion, moreover, also lays claim to a mode of knowledge "in the Uncreated Light," and that in a more perfect sense than in Henry's own opinion. For the agent intellect, which, according to the common opinion takes the place of the Uncreated Light, is itself an effect of the same Uncreated Light. And furthermore, the agent intellect is a more perfect principle of operation, as far as the human act of understanding is concerned. For the agent intellect belongs to the very nature of the human soul. Its action is not merely accidental as is the action of the created light which, according to Henry, would have to be infused by the Uncreated Light:

Si<sup>24</sup> in intellectu, igitur lux increata non immutat ad cognoscendum sinceram veritatem nisi mediante effectu suo, et ita aequè perfecte videtur opinio communis ponere notitiam in lumine increato, sicut ista opinio, quia ponit eam videri in intellectu agente, qui est effectus lucis increatae et perfectior quam esset illud lumen accidentale creatum (*ibid.*).

Since there is no illumination prior to the act, it remains that true knowledge must be traced, either to the Uncreated Light alone, or to the Uncreated Light together with the intellect and the object. The first alternative must be excluded, for to attribute the act of knowledge to the Uncreated Light alone would be running counter to the commonly accepted doctrine on the agent intellect and its functions in the process of knowledge. If the knowledge of truth were the exclusive effect of the Uncreated Light, then the intellect would be merely a passive recipient of an external influence of the Divine Intellect. Since the latter is no more determined toward one intellect than toward another, we would have to assume that it imparts knowledge of truth on its own free determination and regardless of personal human activity. In other words, the agent intellect which is the noblest principle of intellectual operation would be excluded from every participation in one of our most characteristic and personal acts. It goes without saying that this is highly incongruous. Aristotle<sup>25</sup> gives a more satisfactory, because more exact, expla-

24. In this paragraph we quote from Vivès (with the exception of the very last word), in view of several obscurities in the *Assisi Ms.* version.

25. *De anima*, III, chap. 5; 403a 10-17.



nation of the process of knowledge by describing the act of understanding in terms of a twofold intellectual activity. Between this twofold activity<sup>26</sup> a mutual correlation and completion can be observed. The first is of the possible intellect which is thus named in virtue of "becoming all things;" the other is of the agent intellect which owes its name to the fact that it "makes all things" which are received in, and retained by, the possible intellect:

Si autem nihil causat ante actum, aut ergo sola lux causat actum, aut lux cum intellectu et objecto. Si sola lux, ergo intellectus agens nullam habet operationem in cognitione sinceræ veritatis, quod videtur inconveniens, quia ista operatio est nobilissima intellectus nostri; igitur intellectus agens, qui est nobilissimus in animo, concurreret aliquo modo ad istam actionem.

Et item, actus intelligendi non magis diceretur unius hominis quam alterius, et sic superflueret intellectus agens, quod non est dicendum, cum ejus sit omnia facere, sicut possibilis omnia fieri.

Similiter etiam secundum Philosophum tertio *de anima* intellectus agens correspondet in ratione activi, possibilis in ratione passivi; ergo quidquid recipit possibilis, ad illud aliquo modo se habet active intellectus agens.<sup>27</sup> (*Loc. cit.*; 186a f.).

The opponent may seek to escape the incongruities that follow from his position by granting that although the agent intellect cooperates in the genesis of the act of true knowledge, this is due, not to its own intrinsic energy, but to the fact that it is used by the Divine Light as a means or instrument for the production of knowledge in the possible intellect. This is a useless and invalid argument. For, no matter how perfect an agent is in itself, if it acts through the medium of an instrument, it is not in a position to produce an effect which is more perfect than that which is proper to the instrument itself. Hence, if the agent intellect cannot attain perfect truth of itself (as the objector maintains), it will not be able to do so when acting as an instrument of the Uncreated Light. It follows that no other way out of the difficulty is left but to admit the second alternative, i.e., that the Uncreated Light is the cause of knowledge

26. We say: "twofold activity," because, according to Scotus, the possible intellect is not merely passive. It has its own operation in the process of knowledge. Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 7, n. 38; IX, 387b ff.

27. In the *Assisi Ms.* the last two paragraphs are accompanied by the marginal note: "Non in libro Scoti." If we make use of these texts it is because they are quoted in the very body of the *MS.*, which seems to speak for their value.

of sincere truth together with the intellect and the object. This solution, however, does not differ substantially from the common opinion which, though admitting unhesitatingly a natural knowledge of truth, nevertheless also ascribes every certain cognition of truth to the Eternal Light as to its remote cause:

Et hoc etiam inconueniens quod illatum est ibi concluditur ex opinione praedicta per aliam viam, quia secundum sic opinantem agens utens instrumento non potest habere actionem excedentem actionem instrumenti; ergo cum virtus intellectus agentis non possit in cognitionem sinceræ veritatis, lux aeterna utens intellectu agente non poterit in cognitionem vel in actionem istius cognitionis sinceræ veritatis,<sup>28</sup> ita quod intellectus agens habeat ibi rationem instrumenti. Si dicas quod lux increata cum intellectu et objecto causat istam veritatem sinceram, hæc est opinio communis quæ ponit lucem aeternam, sicut causam remotam causare omnem certam cognitionem vel veritatem; vel ergo erit ista opinio inconueniens, vel non discordabit a communi opinione (*loc. cit.*; n. 17, 186b).

28. Lux aeterna.../ *om. Viv.*



## CHAPTER III

### EVIDENCE AS THE BASIS OF CERTITUDE

Having considered the negative aspects of Scotus' doctrine on certain knowledge, we must now pass on to his own positive teachings on certitude and its foundation, i.e., evidence. As a prerequisite for the understanding of the nature and function of the latter it is first necessary to consider briefly Scotus' conception of truth. This will be followed by a description of evidence and its functions in general. The role of evidence in particular kinds of knowledge will be considered in Part II and III of this dissertation.

#### A. THE NATURE OF TRUTH

The goal of all intellectual endeavor is the knowledge of truth. The knowledge of truth is the result of a complex operation. One can distinguish two main operations of the intellect. The first, which the Scholastics call simple apprehension or simple intellection, furnishes the material for thought by apprehending simple concepts from either the sensible world or from internal experience.

The second operation is composition and division, i.e., the affirmation of agreement or disagreement between the predicate and the subject, the expression of the former being an affirmative, and of the latter a negative proposition:

Intellectus secundum Philosophum, tertio *de Anima*,<sup>1</sup> habet duplicem operationem, scilicet intelligentiam simplicium, et intelligentiam compositorum, scilicet componere et dividere intellecta (*Quodlibeta*, quaestio XIV, n. 3; XXVI, 5a).

A third operation may be added, viz., the reasoning process which is a combination of several judgments, from which a conclusion is derived:

Prima operatio intellectus, ut habetur tertio *de Anima*...est apprehensio simplicium, quam consequitur compositio ut actus secundus, et argumentatio ut tertius actus (*Quaestiones subtilissimae in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*, lib. I, quaest. 4, n. 4; VII, 53a).

Formal truth is found only in the second and third operations of

1. Book III, chap. 6; 430a 26-b 5.

the intellect, never in simple apprehension. Material truth, however, is present even in sense-apprehensions and simple intellections. Scotus states repeatedly that simple apprehension is always true, whether it follows upon a true or a false sense-apprehension:

Prima operatio intellectus semper vera est, licet sequens sensum errantem; ita enim concipitur albedo, si visus apprehendit illud esse album, quod est nigrum, sicut si albedo conciperetur a sensu vere vidente album, quia sufficit quod species vere repraesentativa albi veniat ad intellectum, ad hoc ut simplici apprehensione album vere apprehendatur (*ibid.*, n. 14; 59a).<sup>2</sup>

But he never omits to call attention to the fact that the simple intellect does not know or apprehend truth. In his commentary on *Peribermenias*<sup>3</sup> Scotus describes truth as the conformity between things as measures, and the intellect as that which is measured. He adds that the simple intellect and the senses may be said to be true, because they conform to their measure. Nevertheless it would be false to say that they know truth. To know truth means to know the conformity of knowledge with the thing known, which neither the senses nor the simple intellect can do. It is reserved to judgment to decide whether the thing is in reality as it is perceived. For this reason the intellect cannot know truth except through composition or division:

Licet autem sensus dicatur verus, et intellectus similiter, propter conformitatem ad suam mensuram, tamen sensus secundum se non cognoscit conformitatem sui ad id, quod cognoscit, nec cognoscit se conformem suo cognoscibili. Similiter est de intellectu simplici... Intellectus simplex est verus, licet non cognoscat verum, quia cognoscere verum est cognoscere conformitatem intellectus ad rem. Intellectus autem hoc non facit, nisi quia iudicat ita esse in re, et propter hoc componit vel dividit; propter quod nullus intellectus praeter componentem vel dividendem verum cognoscere potest (*In duos libros Peribermenias, operis secundi, quod appellant, quaestiones octo*, q. 3, n. 1; I, 588a-b).<sup>4</sup>

Simple apprehension may be compared with the image produced

2. Cf. *loc. cit.* VI, q. 3, n. 6; 338a: "Intellectus circa quod quid est semper est verus, sicut sensus circa proprium sensibile."

3. Although the authenticity of this work is not yet established beyond every doubt, it shows indubitably a genuinely Scotistic trend of thought.

4. Fr. Messner, in *Schauendes u. begriffliches Erkennen*, p. 72, points out that Scotus ascribes truth and error to the judicative act, whereas objectivity or non-objectivity can already be spotted in the simple thought-contents. He adds a warning against the identification of truth with objectivity, and of error with non-objectivity.



by an object in a mirror. The mirror represents the object as it is, and can therefore be said to render a true image of the object. However, it does not perceive the conformity of the image with the object. Likewise simple apprehension is always true materially, but never formally. It contains something that is true, but the truth itself is not apprehended by the intellect.<sup>5</sup>

The knowledge of truth in the formal sense is the exclusive privilege of the composing and dividing intellect:

(Intellectus simplicis) non est errare, nec verum dicere; istae sunt enim tantum conditiones intellectus componentis et dividētis (*Oxon.* II, d. 6, q. 1, f., 122 r, a; n. 6, XII, 336b f.).<sup>6</sup>

Judgments are either affirmative (*compositio*) or negative (*divisio*), according to whether the predicate is attributed to, or denied of, the subject. A composition, therefore, is a judgment in which it is affirmed that this particular predicate belongs to this particular subject; a division is a judgment in which it is affirmed that this particular predicate does not belong to this particular subject.

The reason why truth in the strict sense is found in affirmative and negative judgments only may be described in the following manner. To say that the intellect composes or divides is equivalent to saying that the intellect judges that "it is so in reality," or that "it is not so in reality." It is only in such judgments that truth, i.e., conformity of the intellect with the thing, is present in the sense described above. Affirmative judgments are true if that which is said to be is; negative judgments are true if that which is said not to be is not. For, the intellect does not formulate a judgment by stating that one intelligible species is another intelligible species, but by affirming its own conformity with the objective state of affairs. Whatever the intellect judges to be, it judges it to be as it

5. Modern text-books of Epistemology present essentially the same doctrine. Cf., for instance, Fernand van Steenberghen, *Epistémologie* (Louvain, 1947), 2. ed., p. 154: "La vérité se trouve déjà d'une certaine manière, inchoativement, dans l'idée ou le concept; elle s'y trouve même nécessairement, car le concept est nécessairement la représentation d'un objet d'expérience: un concept qui ne représenterait rien est une contradiction dans les termes; le concept est donc toujours vrai, c'est-à-dire conforme au réel qu'il représente. Mais cette conformité est encore statique et inaperçue."

6. Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3, n. 12; IX, 110b ff.

is in reality. And this is why only the judging intellect knows the truth:

Intellectus componens cognoscit illam conformitatem sui ad rem. Unde intellectum componere vel dividere non est nisi intellectum judicare ita esse in re, vel ita non esse, sicut res conformatur intellectui. Non enim intellectus componit per hoc, quod dicit unam speciem intelligibilem esse aliam, sed per hoc quod judicat ita esse in re, sicut intellectus conformatur rei. Quidquid enim judicat esse componit ut in re est; et ideo nullus intellectus nisi componens cognoscit verum (*Op. II Perihermen.*, q. 3, n. 3; I, 588b).

The composing or dividing intellect, therefore, depends for its truth on the objective order. If the object is in reality such as it is intellectually apprehended, then the composition or division is true. If the objective state of affairs differs from what is expressed in the composition or division, then the latter are false:

Veritas intellectus non dependet nisi a solo objecto, quod objectum si ita se habeat sicut intelligitur, verus est intellectus (*Oxon.* I, d. 48, quaest. unica, f. 96 r, a; n. 2, X, 780b).

Ab eo quod res est vel non est, dicitur oratio vera vel falsa. Potest etiam poni circa rem quae intelligitur, et sic: intelligens rem aliter quam est fallitur (*Oxon.* IV, d. 50, q. 6, f. 290 v, a; n. 10, XXI, 567b).

Wherever Scotus describes truth he insists on its objectivity. He does not consider the intellect as a merely passive faculty in the process of knowledge;<sup>7</sup> yet he never goes to the extreme of maintaining that the intellect creates truth. For him, as for the Scholastics in general, true knowledge is essentially a relation. To be true, the act of knowledge must conform with the objective state of affairs, i.e., it must express the relation existing between subject and predicate in reality. In fact, as an act of knowledge is unthinkable without an object of knowledge, so likewise a relation apprehended in any act of knowledge is incomprehensible except on the basis of an objective relation between subject and predicate.

Let us examine more closely in what this objectivity of truth consists. The truth of an act of knowledge (at least of a perfect act of knowledge, as in an affirmative or negative proposition) is not something of an absolute nature, but is the result of a comparison of one simple concept with another. This act is followed by a *relatio rationis* between the two extremes. It is this relation which

7. Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 7; IX, 335b-398a.



can be either true or false:

Videtur quod actus secundus (i.e., the act of composition or division) non est alicujus absolute, sicut primus (i.e., simple apprehension); sed est actus comparativus unius conceptus simplicis ad alterum, ut ejusdem in affirmativa, vel diversa in negativa; hunc autem necessario sequitur vel concomitatur relatio rationis in utroque extremo ad alterum...quae nata est esse vera (*Metaph.* VI, q. 3, n. 13; VII, 344a).

By calling the result of the act of comparison of the extremes a *relatio rationis* Scotus does not mean that we have here a relation that exists only in the intellect. He wants to say that the relation can be called true only as it is conceived by the intellect. Although a relation may occasionally exist in the intellect independently of a real relation, Scotus always insists that even such a *relatio rationis* is ultimately based on a virtual relation in the objective order. This concept of virtual relation will be briefly discussed a little further.

As Messner remarks, Scotus does not demand a strict image-likeness (*Bildaehnlichkeit*) between knowledge and the object of knowledge. Knowledge is the common effect of two causes, viz., of the knowing subject and the object known.<sup>8</sup> On the part of the knowing subject the resulting knowledge is basically different from the object, because there is a fundamental difference between the order of thought and the order of reality. This difference does not exclude a cognitive coordination between knowledge and object. As the greatest possible likeness between A and B does not justify one in stating a cognitive relation between B and A, so likewise no degree of difference between B and A can by itself prevent one from establishing a cognitive relation between them.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, while the sensible species in the phantasy may be said to be similar to the object, inasmuch as it faithfully represents the object, the same cannot be said of the intelligible species which conditions the judgment. The intelligible species which is the result of the co-causation of the phantasm and the agent intellect is obviously of a more undetermined or general nature than the species in

8. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 7, nn. 20-23; IX, 361a-364a.

9. *Schauendes u. begriffliches Erkennen*, p. 51.

the phantasy. It is in virtue of this universality of signification to which the sensible species is transferred that universal judgments are made possible:

Phantasma quidem gignit speciem sibi similem, et reprehensivam vel representativam objecti<sup>10</sup> similitudine determinationis vel indeterminationis; nam ista similitudo potest auferri ratione intellectus agentis communicantis vel concausantis qui potest tribuere effectui maiorem indeterminationem quam potuit habere a solo phantasmate, ita quod similitudo est naturae repraesentatae, sive phantasma sit causa partialis sive totalis (*Oxon.* II, d. 9, q. 2, f. 128 v, b; n. 34, XII, 507b f).

Scotus, therefore, does not place knowledge in a strict similarity between thing and concept, or in an exact reproduction in the intellect of the object known. It is sufficient that there be "likeness through imitation, such as is the likeness between an idea and its object:"

Uterius ad propositum, cum aliquid possit multipliciter participare perfectionem ab alio, actus cognoscendi sic participative se habet respectu objecti, sicut similitudo respectu cuius est. Non dico similitudinem per communicationem ejusdem formae, sicut est albi ad album, sed similitudo per imitationem sicut est ideati ad ideam (*Quodl.* q. 13, n. 12; XXV, 526a).

Accordingly, Scotus describes the relation of truth, not in terms of strict image-likeness, but in terms of conformity between a sign and that which is signified. This concept of truth is developed in the commentary on *Metaphysics*. Among other significant texts we read the following:

Verum in signo dicit significatum esse id, quod manifestatur per signum, et in hoc signum manifestare illud quod est, et ita conformitatem signi ad signatum (*Metaph.* VI, q. 3, n. 8; VII, 340b).

As Boehner<sup>11</sup> remarks, this definition of truth is ambiguous, as it fails to distinguish between the sign-relation of simple concepts and that of complex concepts or propositions. "The difference between these two relations is this," writes Boehner, "that the meaning (the *signatum*) of the simple concept has no other existence than to be the object of this conceptual act, i.e., it is as it is conceived, and hence no difformity can enter into this sign-relation. On the other hand, the sign-relation of a complex concept (i.e., here,

10. Similitudine naturali, sed non *add. Viv.*

11. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., "Ockham's Theory of Truth" in *Franciscan Studies*, V (1945), p. 157.



of a proposition) *presupposes* the sign-relation of the simple concept; in other words, the sign-relation of the simple concept naturally precedes the sign-relation of the proposition and thus is the basis for the agreement or disagreement, for conformity or difformity of the sign which is the proposition with the signs which are the simple concepts. The objects or the meanings of the simple concepts thus measure the proposition and account for its truth or falsity.... Truth considered in itself and not considered as object of the intellect is the conformity of a complex concept or a proposition with the relation virtually given by the extremes or the simple concepts. If the proposition is in conformity with the *significatum* (meaning) of its elements, the proposition is true; if it is in difformity, it is false."<sup>12</sup>

This broad concept of truth makes it possible for Scotus to apply it in the most extensive fashion, even to those propositions where an image-likeness or *adaequatio* is absent. This is probably one of the reasons why in his description of truth, Scotus, as a rule, avoids such terms as "adaequatio" and "similitudo" which could be understood ambiguously. He gives preference to the expressions "relatio mensurati ad mensuram, correspondentia," etc.<sup>13</sup> As Boehner puts it, Scotus' description of truth is "stated so generally that it comprises all the possible relations, given in any...proposition."<sup>14</sup> It is this concept of true knowledge as a diminished sort of likeness which accounts for our ability to formulate and apprehend the truth of such propositions as "homo est homo" or "Deus est Deus," where no real relation is found between the terms *in re*. The relation between the extremes exists actually only in the intellect. However, this does not mean that the proposition is false or that there is nothing in the object corresponding to the proposition. To be sure, it would be difficult to adapt to such propositions the definition which places truth in a *similitudo imaginis* or strict ade-

12. *Loc. cit.*, p. 157 f.

13. *Loc. cit.*, p. 158.

14. Cf., for instance, *Op. II Periber.*, q. 3, n. 2; I, 588a: "Verum dicitur unumquodque, ex hoc quod est adaequatum suae mensurae;" *Quodl.*, q. X, nn. 8 ss, XXV, 243 ss, where Scotus elaborates upon the concept of relation in knowledge.

quation. But there is not the least difficulty that it fits exactly with Scotus' definition of truth as a *correspondentia*. All that is required for the relation to be true is that it correspond to the thing. And it corresponds to the thing if it is such as to be virtually contained in the thing, i.e., such as the thing itself would produce in the intellect, were it to produce that relation:

Ulterius ista habitudo rationis conformis est rei, non quod oporteat in re esse relationem aliquam inter extrema, ut in re similem isti rationis, quae est inter extrema ut intellecta, imo ut ab intellectu invicem comparata, nam tunc esset haec falsa, *homo est homo*...Sed tunc hic habitudo correspondet rei, quando est talis, qualem res virtualiter continet, sive qualem res de se nata esset facere in intellectu, si faceret relationem illam (*Metaph.*, VI, q. 3, n. 13; VII, 344a f).<sup>15</sup>

A proposition, therefore, is known as true if we know its conformity with the relation which is included in the extremes or simple concepts, irrespective of whether this relation is real or merely virtual. We shall see later that a relation can be included in the extremes in three different ways. Accordingly, three kinds of knowledge can be distinguished, viz., self-evident propositions and principles, conclusions derived from self-evident propositions and principles, and contingent propositions.

Presently we shall proceed to examine the criterion of truth, and the conditions required so that the mentioned objective relations may be apprehended by the intellect. In other words, we shall try to answer, according to Scotus' teachings, the crucial question: "What enables the human intellect to know truth?"

#### B. NATURE AND FUNCTION OF EVIDENCE IN GENERAL

##### 1. *Evidence, the Ultimate Criterion of Truth and Motive of Certitude*

It has been said that truth, in the proper sense of the word, viz., logical truth or truth of judgments, is of an essentially relative nature. In other words, the formal knowledge of truth presupposes the presence of two terms, namely of the intellect and the object. Although truth first appears formally in the intellect, it is not the intellect that creates or produces truth.<sup>16</sup> True knowledge presup-

15. Vide Boehner, *loc. cit.*, pp. 158 f, where a more exhaustive treatment of this and other related texts is offered.

16. Cf. Donato Zuchherelli, O.F.M., "Il pensiero del B. Giovanni Duns Scoto sulla contingenza dell'ordine etico" in *Studi Francescani*, II (1915), p. 385: "I Dot-



poses the existence of an objective regulative norm to which the intellectual judgment has to conform. Scotus calls this norm "evidentia rei in se." For the Franciscan Doctor, evidence is first of all an objective property of things and propositions. Not that he ignores the concept of what we call "subjective evidence." The very expression "evidentia rei in se" suggests that it is taken as the counterpart of subjective evident knowledge. In fact, we find that the phrase "notitia evidens" is frequently used throughout Scotus' works. It is important to note, however, that for him subjective evidence is made possible only through a previous objective evidence. Objective evidence can be considered either as something absolute or as something that is actually or at least potentially related to the human intellect.

## 2. Objective Evidence, an Absolute Property of Things

If we look at things in an absolute manner, i.e., if we disregard their relation to a particular intellect, we can say that their evidence is in exact proportion to their entity. Aristotle<sup>17</sup> writes that things are related to truth as they are to entity. This saying must be interpreted in the sense that everything is knowable in the same measure as it has entity. This knowability of things "in themselves" is called by Scotus "evidentia rei in se:"

Et ita debet intelligi veritas de qua loquitur Philosophus II. *Metaph.*<sup>18</sup> pro evidentia rei in se, sive pro intelligibilitate eius ex parte sui (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 28 r, a; n. 30, IX, 83b).

The same thought is expressed in another passage where Scotus explains the various meanings of *certa et sincera veritas*. It can be considered from three different viewpoints. Firstly, it can be considered from the part of the knowing (created) intellect, i.e., as actual infallible knowledge (logical truth); secondly, truth can be viewed as *passio entis* or as a property of being (ontological truth). It is in virtue of this transcendental property that every being is true and knowable as such to every intellect, due to the knowability of being itself; thirdly, truth can be seen as a relation of conformity:

tori Scholastici mettendo a base della filosofia il principio della distinzione del soggetto dall'oggetto, dell'io dal non-io, dell'ordine della realtà dall'ordine della cognizione, hanno pure ammesso che la mente non crea ma scopre la verità."

17. *Metaphysics* II (alias I Minor), chap. 1; 993b 30-31.

18. Sicut res se habent ad entitatem, ita ad veritatem *add. Viv.*

Quid intelligit per veritatem certam et sinceram? Aut veritatem infalibilem, absque scilicet dubitatione et deceptione... Aut intelligit de veritate quae est passio entis, et tunc cum ens possit naturaliter intelligi, ergo et verum ut est passio ejus... Aut tertio intelligit per veritatem conformitatem ad exemplar... (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4; f. 32 v, a; n. 16, IX, 185b).<sup>19</sup>

As Albanese points out, the second mode of truth, contrary to the first and third modes, prescind from every actual relation of being and intellect. It considers only the knowability (*manifestabilità*) of being, or that property by which being is capable of being known by all intellects in general, and abstracting from every actual knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

Evidence, therefore, is always present in the thing in consequence of its very being. Entity and truth being convertible concepts, everything is susceptible of being known by the very fact that it has being. Even under the assumption that no intellect at all were actually existing, the knowability of things would in no wise be diminished:

Si nullus esset intellectus, adhuc quaelibet res secundum gradum suae entitatis esset nata se manifestare; et haec notitia est qua res dicitur nota naturae, non quia natura cognoscat illam, sed quia propter manifestationem maiorem vel minorem nata esset, quantum est de se, perfectius vel minus perfectecognosci (*Metaph.* VI, q. 3, n. 5; VII, 337b).

To say that something is absolutely evident is not equivalent to denying every relation to an intellect. It would be meaningless to speak of evidence, while denying every relation, including a potential relation, to a knowing intellect. To do so would be to render unintelligible the very concept of evidence. Albanese goes as far as to state that essential evidence of things or their *manifestabilità* is necessarily relative, i.e., in the sense that it cannot absolutely disregard the intellect as the term of potential knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Hence,

19. Cf. *supra*, pp. 44-46 for a more detailed description of these three concepts of truth.

20. Cornelio Albanese, O.F.M., "Intorno alla nozione della verità ontologica" in *Studi Francescani* I (1915), p. 275: "Nel terzo caso (Fr. Albanese considers transcendental truth in the third place and truth as conformity in the second) invece si prescinde da qualunque relazione *attuale* tra l'ente e l'intelletto, e si considera soltanto la manifestabilità dell'ente, cioè quella proprietà (*passio transcendentalis*) per cui l'ente è capace d'esser conosciuto da qualsiasi intelletto, fatta astrazione da ogni conoscenza attuale."

21. *Loc. cit.*, p. 278.



by saying that every being is absolutely evident, Scotus wants to denote that, as far as the thing is concerned, it can be known according to the grade of its perfection or entity. It need not, however, be actually known by any particular intellect.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Objective Evidence in Relation to the Human Intellect

There is only one intellect which apprehends all things perfectly, viz., the Divine Intellect. The Uncreated Intellect knows all things according to their proper degree of intelligibility, or in other words, according to their absolute objective evidence. Created intellects apprehend only those things that fall under their proper object, or in other words, those things that are proportionate to them. Thus the human intellect (at least in its present state) is set in motion mainly by sensible objects:

Non autem oportet quod res sicut se habet ad entitatem, sic se habeat ad cognosci, nisi<sup>23</sup> cognosci ab intellectu illo qui respicit intelligibilia omnia secundum gradum proprium cognoscibilitatis eorum, qualis non est noster, sed maxime cognoscit sensibilia (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 28r, a; n. 30, IX, 83b).

The remark, "at least in the present state," is added because, according to Scotus, the adequate object of the human intellect as such, i.e., of the intellect considered as potency, is Being in the broadest sense of the term and without any kind of restriction.<sup>24</sup> Everything that essentially includes the *ratio entis*, and for this reason, everything that is contained in something including the *ratio entis*, is, absolutely speaking, an adequate object of our intellect.<sup>25</sup> Hence, considered as potency, the human intellect is able to know any being, regardless of its nature or perfection. During mortal existence, however, its intellections are limited to, or at least conditioned by, the quiddities of material things:

Fi pro statu isto adaequatur in ratione motivi quidditas rei sensibilis; et ideo pro isto statu non naturaliter intelliget alia quae non continentur sub isto primo motivo (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3, f. 30r, b; n. 24, IX, 148a).

22. Cf. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M., *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1946), pp. 117 f., where Fr. Wolter studies "*Truth as a Coextensive Attribute*."

23. *Intelligatur add. Viv.*

24. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3, n. 8; IX, 108b f.

25. Albanese, *loc. cit.*, p. 279. For further explanation of this point of doctrine cf. A. Wolter, "Duns Scotus on the Natural Desire for the Supernatural" in *The New Scholasticism* XXIII (1949), esp. pp. 283-301.

#### 4. Subjective Evidence or Evident Knowledge

Although evidence is primarily an objective property of things, it is always considered in relation to a knowing, or as Scotus puts it, a seeing intellect. Even what we have called "absolute evidence" has been described in terms of knowability, i.e., of a potential relation to a knowing intellect. It is plain that as soon as we proceed to stress the function of evidence in *actual* knowledge, the subjective side comes into prominence. The subjective element in evidence is clearly expressed in the phrases "evident knowledge," "evident certitude," which Scotus uses in the texts we are about to analyse. The sense of such expressions can be interpreted thus. Any subjective knowledge is evident insofar as it owes its whole content and truth-value to the thing insofar as it presents itself to intellect in its objective knowability. For this reason the subjective act by which the object is apprehended can be called with full right an act of evident knowledge. To say that knowledge is evident, therefore, means that it is formulated on the basis of, and dependent on, objective evidence. We shall now examine in detail the conditions which have to be fulfilled on the part of both object and intellect so that truly evident knowledge may be produced.

#### C. DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENT KNOWLEDGE

What is the definition of evident knowledge? Scotus gives no *ex professo* treatment of evidence, and hence we look in vain for an explicit definition of it. However, there is at least one text from which we are able to gather a more or less satisfactory notion of what he considers to be the essential traits of evident knowledge. Let us quote this significant passage:

Ad auctoritatem Augustini dicendum quod illa scientia est distincta notitia, sed non evidens simpliciter, quia non attingit ad notitiam distinctam subjecti in se praesentis (*Reportatio Exam.*, prol. q. 2, cod. Vien. 1453 fol. 7 v; Viv. n. 18, XXII, 43b).

In order to obtain a definition of evident knowledge it suffices to reiterate this text positively as follows:

Notitia evidens est distincta notitia subjecti in se praesentis.

As is implicit in this definition, evident knowledge presupposes several conditions on the part of the object and of the subject.



1. *Conditions for Evidence on the Part of the Object*

For evident knowledge two conditions are required on the part of the object. First, the object must be *present*; second, it must be present *in se*.

*The object must be present*

First, let it be noted that the word "object," when used in an epistemological sense, is to be taken in a very broad sense, so as to include not only really existing or concrete things, but also logical structures, first objects of speculative sciences, and the like. According to these different meanings of object we must distinguish various kinds of presence. When we deal with logical structures or first objects of certain sciences, for instance, it is sufficient that they be present in the mind. Objects of this kind cannot be present in a material, concrete sense, for the simple reason that they are of an immaterial nature, or at least are considered in a sense which transcends the material order, as for instance, the objects of mathematical sciences. In these, the presence of the object consists simply in its being apprehended with sufficient clearness by the mind. For these sciences proceed, not on the basis of experience, or *a posteriori*, but from the mere analysis of concepts. The conclusions that are evidently contained in the first object are drawn from it in a purely logical process of deduction:

Quando habitus est in aliquo intellectu habens evidentiam ex objecto, tunc primum objectum illius habitus ut est illius, non tantum continet virtualiter illum habitum, ita quod notitia objecti in isto intellectu continet evidentiam habitus, in isto intellectu; quia intellectus cognoscens tale objectum potest elicere omnem conclusionem huius habitus<sup>26</sup> (*Oxon. prol. q. 3, f. 5r, a; Viv. quaest. 2. lateralis, n. 12, VIII, 150b*).<sup>27</sup>

In sciences which deal with contingent things, however, such a mode of presence is not sufficient to produce evident knowledge. These sciences do not fulfill the two conditions of *a priori* sciences,

26. Quia.../ *add. Viv.*

27. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 4; 122b-123a: "Ratio primi subjecti est continere in se primo virtualiter omnes veritates illius habitus cuius est. Quod proba sic: primo, quia objectum primum continet propositiones immediatas, quia subjectum illarum continet praedicatum, et ita evidentiam propositionis totius. Propositiones autem immediae continent conclusiones..."

i.e., they have no first object which virtually contains the *habitus*, so that the knowledge of the first object alone would render possible the knowledge of all the conclusions contained in it:

In habitu vero non habente evidentiam ex objecto, sed causatam aliunde,<sup>28</sup> non oportet dare primum objectum ejus habere duas dictas condiciones, immo neutram oportet dari, quia perinde est habitui ut in hoc, ac si esset de contingentibus, quae neutro modo habent objectum primum (*ibid.*, 150b-151a).

What, then, is required for contingent propositions to be known evidently? The reason why contingent propositions are not evident *ex objecto* is that their subject does not include the predicate in such a way that the latter is known through a mere analysis of the former. If the subject is indifferent to one or another predicate,<sup>29</sup> it is impossible to formulate any true proposition about it, unless a direct and immediate apprehension of the actual concrete relation between subject and predicate is had.<sup>30</sup> It was the realization of this fact that led Scotus to develop his theory of intuitive knowledge. He holds that, through intuitive cognition, the human intellect is capable of apprehending existing objects, not only in an absolute manner, or quidditatively, but also under their existential aspect. As Day points out,<sup>31</sup> "when some sensible object" - and it is with sensible objects that we are now concerned - "is present to our senses, a double cognition can be caused in the intellect...: 1. *abstractive cognition*, in which the agent intellect ab-

28. Quam ab objecto suo *add. Viv.*

29. "Dico hic contingens...cujus oppositum posset fieri quando istud fit" *De primo principio*, cap. 4, quarta conclusio (Revised text ed. by Evan Roche, O.F.M., St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1949), p. 84. The true nature of contingent truths could hardly be better characterized than has been done by Dr. Klein, who calls them "neutral." Vide Joseph Klein, "Der Glaube nach der Lehre des Johannes Duns Scotus" in *Franziskanische Studien* XII (1925), pp. 197 f.

30. It is true that Scotus also speaks of a first object in contingent science: "Contingentium est ordo, quia aliqua est prima vera contingens, et ita subjectum primum multarum veritatum contingentium..." (*Ibid.* n. 13, 156a). But such first objects do not contain all the truths of the whole science. They only contain certain primary truths: "subjectum primum...cui immediate insunt veritates primae illius habitus" (*ibid.*). Moreover, Scotus states expressly that such first subjects, contrary to the first subject of demonstrative sciences, cannot be known except through intuition of the extremes: "Primum notum in contingentibus nihil est nisi per intuitionem extremorum" (*ibid.*).

31. *Op. cit.*, pp. 81 f.



stracts the *species* of quiddity from the *species* in the phantasm; this species represents the object absolutely, without any reference to actual existence in time and location in space; 2. *intuitive cognition*, in which the object is apprehended precisely as present to the observer here and now - i.e., not absolutely (which means from the quidditative aspect alone) but existentially." A little further in the same author we read that "without intuitive cognition our intellects could not be certain of the existence of *any* objects: *cognitio quae dicitur intuitiva, potest esse intellectiva, alioquin intellectus non esset certus de aliqua existentia alicujus objecti* (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 17; XX, 348b-349a)." <sup>32</sup>

These facts leave no doubt as to the indispensability of intuitive cognition as a presupposition for evident knowledge of contingents. In fact, how could we formulate a true proposition concerning contingent things, unless we first grasped the objects as they are actually existent and present to us? Scotus does not fail to furnish explicit and implicit statements regarding this intimate connection between intuitive and evident knowledge. He observes that it is by reason of the distinct presence of the object that a distinct and evident knowledge of the same is obtained:

Objectum naturale est in se et distincte praesens...et ideo movet ad notitiam distinctam et evidentem ex evidentia objecti (*Rep. Exam. prol.* q. 2, f. 8r).

As we have just seen, it is precisely the knowledge of present objects *as present* that constitutes one of the distinctive characteristics of intuitive cognition. Scotus goes further. For him, presence and evidence, and hence intuitive and evident knowledge, are equivalent terms:

(Fides infusa) quamvis firmiter inclinet intellectum in objecta, tamen non facit ea praesentia ex evidentia rei, nec aliquid aliud facit ea sic evidenter presentia (*Oxon.* III, d. 23, q. un., f. 165v, b; n. 11, XV, 17a). <sup>33</sup>

The same thought is brought out in a negative, but nonetheless emphatic formulation in the *Reportatio Examinata*. While describing the knowledge of the Prophets, Scotus calls it non-intuitive and non-evident, precisely because it does not proceed from a present object, but is produced immediately by God:

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 82 f.

33. In the *Vivès* text the mentioned equivalence appears in even stronger formulation: "nec aliquid aliud facit ea sic evidentia *vel* praesentia."

Talis notitia dicitur locutio Dei, qualis in Prophetis, non tamen clara et intuitiva, et non est immediate evidens ab objecto... Unde iste gradus (cognitionis) est objecti non praesentis intellectui nec in se nec in aliquo repraesentativo, sed immediate causata a Deo, quae tamen non est evidens ab objecto (*Rep. Exam.* prol. q. 2, f. 7v; cf. *Rep. Par.* n. 17; XXII, 43a).

In the following question of the same work, Scotus again juxtaposes clear and intuitive knowledge. "Clear" knowledge, as is apparent from the analogy with *visus*, is here obviously used as a synonym of evident knowledge:

Perfectionis est in potentia inferiori sensitiva apprehensiva cognoscere suum objectum clare et intuitive in existentia ejus, sicut patet in visu; ergo hoc non repugnat intellectui respectu sui objecti... (*Rep. Exam.* prol. q. 3, f. 8v).

To exclude every possible doubt concerning the mentioned connection between the two kinds of knowledge, we quote a last text where Scotus describes evident knowledge as the natural consequence of intuitive cognition:

Si res ipsae de quibus Scriptura tractat essent clare apprehensae et intuitive, generarent notitiam certam absque omni dubitatione, et haec notitia, quia evidens est, diceretur scientia<sup>34</sup> (*Oxon.* III, d. 24, q. un., f. 167v, a; n. 17, XV, 47b).

It was his failure to grasp the role of intuitive and evident knowledge in the epistemology of Scotus that prompted Mr. Harris to deny the existence of any criterion in the Scotistic theory of truth.<sup>35</sup> Without detaining ourselves with the contradictory statements of Harris' exposition<sup>36</sup> we want to point out that he did not realize that Scotus in no way limits true knowledge to statements about universals, or essential properties of things. That the Franciscan Doctor not only admits, but strenuously defends, the possibility of contingent knowledge is obvious to anyone who is familiar with his classical treatises on certitude and evidence in the *Oxoniense* and in the commentary on *Metaphysics*, as well as to anyone who knows about the importance he attaches to intuitive knowledge. Scotus does not consider the universe as something "neatly arranged into classes fitting into each other like Chinese boxes." Nor does he

34. Et haec notitia.../ *om. Ass. MS.*

35. C.R.S. Harris, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford, 1927), II, p. 39

36. "Of any criterion there is here no question," he writes, And a little further: "The actual criterion was after all not so difficult a thing to find." (*Ibid.*).



maintain that "all that was necessary to the discovery of truth was 'experience'<sup>37</sup> and a knowledge of the rules of the syllogism." It seems unnecessary to adduce any particular text at this place to refute Harris' assertions, as our whole dissertation, and especially the chapters on evident knowledge of contingents, will show their gratuitousness.

*The object must be present in itself*

This is another condition which shows the close connection between evident and intuitive cognition. As intuitive cognition is opposed to abstractive cognition by the fact that the latter is of an object that is indifferent to presence or absence, existence or non-existence, while intuitive knowledge is exclusively of objects existent and present,<sup>38</sup> so likewise evident knowledge is incompatible with abstractive knowledge and any other kind of cognition that is not intuitive. This, of course, refers only to contingent cognition. In analytical sciences the object itself is present by the very fact that it is in the intellect. In contingent knowledge, on the contrary, a concrete and real presence is required. The most perfect presence of this kind is that of the internal acts and states of both the intellectual and emotional spheres.<sup>39</sup> Scotus maintains that many of these acts and states are not only evident but immediately evident<sup>40</sup> in a way similar to the first principles.

As to extramental or trans-subjective facts and states of affairs it is obvious that they cannot be apprehended unless they are actually present to the senses of the knower. This follows from the nature of the senses, which normally react to actual outer or physical stimuli:

37. By "experience" Harris means here merely a "sense-stimulation."

38. Day, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

39. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, n. 15; IX, 183a-b.

40. Although Scotus applies (at least once, namely, in the place last cited) the term "self-evident" to our knowledge of internal acts, we prefer to substitute the phrase "immediately evident" in order to prevent misunderstandings concerning this "self-evidence." We shall see later that the expression "per se notum" has a very specific sense in Scotus. He applies it to denote the manner in which first principles are known. The occasional application of the term to internal acts only indicates that these are apprehended in the same *immediate* manner as first principles.

Sensus enim non percipit nisi praesens, et ideo non cognoscit ex se aliquid se habere, nisi dum praesens est, et non semper praesens est sensui corporali... (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 23; VII, 65a).

It is objected that the presence of the object to the senses is not a sufficient criterion for infallible (*sincera*) and certain truth, because the senses often perceive as present something not present at all. This frequently happens to the sense of taste in the state of fever, and to the sense of sight in the state of anger.<sup>41</sup> Scotus does not dispute the fact that occasional mistakes occur. He also admits that the senses cannot by themselves decide whether or not they are stimulated by an object or by a mere image or species of an object, due to their lack of reflexive power. However, we are always in a position to distinguish between the proper or improper functioning of the senses with the assistance of a faculty that is superior to the senses:

Dicendum quod forte sensus non reflectitur supra speciem, et ideo non discernit utrum tantum specie informetur, vel utrum objectum sit praesens specialiter de phantasia... sed est alia virtus superior ipsa sensitiva, quae semper iudicat de bona et mala dispositione sensus (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 24; VII, 65a).

In a later chapter it will be shown that we have immediate knowledge of whether our faculties are well disposed. This immediate awareness, in turn, enables us to judge the value of the sense-perceptions of abnormal states.

The *praesentia rei in se* required by Scotus for evident knowledge should become clearer by following him through a few questions that deal with the differences between evident knowledge and several other kinds of knowledge where the object is absent either in space or in time. The two main kinds of non-evident knowledge are historical knowledge of past facts, and knowledge through belief. Let us consider them briefly and by way of corollaries to our preceding expositions.

*First corollary. Absence of evidence in past facts.*

Knowledge of the past or historical knowledge does not reach the facts themselves directly and immediately. It has to rely exclusively on the testimony of persons who have actually witnessed the facts.

41. *Loc. cit.*, n. 25; 66a.



Hence historical knowledge does not grasp its objects *in se* as present and existent, or, in other words, it does not fulfill the second condition of evidence. This fact accounts for the profound difference between philosophical and historical knowledge. Philosophy concerns itself primarily with propositions known in virtue of their own terms. Such propositions lose nothing of their evidence, irrespective of when, where, or by whom they are apprehended. For this reason the student of philosophy is always in a position either to refuse or to accept the assertions of his masters, according as they are evident or not. The student of history, however, cannot contradict his master, for history deals with contingent facts of the past, which cannot be verified by the hearer. He has to accept them on the authority and veracity of his master:

Non evidentia tradiderunt priores, ideo posteriores non potuerunt eos per rationem improbare, et noluerunt eis discredere nisi possent pro se rationem, cogentem habere, reverentes eos ut magistros veraces; sed philosophi discipuli per rationem potuerunt magistros improbare, quia materia circa quam altercabantur potuit habere rationes sumptas ex terminis. Exemplum: non ita contradicit discipulus historiographus magistro historiographo sicut philosophus philosopho, quia historiae de praeteritis non possunt esse evidentes, ut avertant discipulum a magistro, sicut possunt esse philosophicae rationes (*Oxon.* prol. q. 3, f. 3r, b; n. 4, VIII, 78a).

It is true that historical knowledge (and for the same reason any knowledge of absent facts) produces a high degree of certainty, and therefore stands above opinion. But it does not produce a strict *scientia* or demonstrative knowledge. For while the conclusions of a *scientia* proceed from evident premises, past facts are non-evident forasmuch as they are knowable only through acceptance of another's testimony:

Concedo mundum non incepisse mecum, non quia scio ipsum praecessisse me, quia praeteritorum non est scientia secundum Augustinum, nec opinor mundum praecessisse me, sed adhaereo firmiter huic, mundum praecessisse me, per fidem acquisitam ex auditu aliquorum, quorum veracitati credo firmiter. Nec dubito...partes mundi esse quas non vidi, quia non dubito de veracitate narrantium talia mihi et asserentium haec vera esse... (*Oxon.* III, d. 23, q. un., f. 165r, b; n. 5, XV, 8b).

*Second corollary. Absence of evidence in belief.*

Scotus explicitly sets evident knowledge in opposition to belief, on the grounds that in natural and evident knowledge the object

itself is distinctly present (except in some abstractive concepts) and consequently produces a distinct knowledge *ex evidentia objecti*. Such is not the case with regard to the object of faith:

Objectum naturale est in se et distincte praesens, nisi in quibusdam conceptibus abstractis a creaturis, et ideo movet ad notitiam distinctam et evidentem ex evidentia objecti; non sic est de objecto fidei (*Rep. Exam. prol. q. 2, f. 8r; cf. Rep. Par. ibid., n. 21, XXII, 45b*).

This text treats primarily of the difference between the object of natural cognition and supernatural faith. However, we can legitimately conclude that the same also applies to those objects of belief based on human authority. For, both supernatural faith (*fides infusa*) and natural faith (*fides acquisita*) have this in common, that their objects are not present *in se*.<sup>42</sup> And since presence *in se* is one of the conditions for evident knowledge, we can conclude that acquired faith, no less than infused faith, is incompatible with evidence.

On the other hand, Scotus is well aware of the fact that, despite the lack of evidence, belief cannot be dispensed with as a source of knowledge. The necessity of belief extends not only to past facts but also to those things which, though actually existing, cannot be perceived *hic et nunc* because of their distance. All these things are not evident, and therefore we must accept what others relate about them. In other words, we must rely on the veracity or truthfulness of the witnesses who assert that it is so. Thus, due to our limited personal experience, belief is the only reliable substitute for evidence. This is true particularly of those facts and things for which we have the authority of society. To refuse to accept the testimony of our fellow men unconditionally, would render life socially impossible:

Aut nulli credes de contingenti quod non vidisti, et ita non credes mundum esse factum ante te, nec locum esse in mundo ubi non fueris, nec istum esse patrem tuum, et illam matrem; et ista incredulitas destrueret omnem vitam politicam. Si igitur vis alicui credere de contingenti

42. Cf. Joseph Klein, "Der Glaube nach der Lehre des Johannes Duns Skotus" in *Franziskanische Studien*, XII (1925), p. 204: "Der Glaubenshabitus neigt zwar den Intellekt hin zu den Glaubenswahrheiten als zu seinen Objekten aberer vergegenwaertigt sie ihm keineswegs als erkannte durch sachliche Evidenz; auch nichts anderes verleiht ihnen diesen Charakter evidenten Vergegenwaertigteits." |



quod tibi non est nec fuit evidens, maxime credendum est communitati, sive illis quae tota communitas approbat (*Oxon. prol. q. 2, f. 3v, a; n. 6, VIII, 84b-85a*).<sup>43</sup>

It is interesting to note, however, that belief itself also is ultimately based on evidence, i.e., on the evident knowledge which the witness has or has had of the facts or objects of which he gives testimony. This is stated in a text of St. Augustine, according to whom things removed from the senses are the object of belief. We believe these things on the testimony of those witnesses from whose senses these same things are not or were not absent:

Profecto, inquit (S. Augustinus), ea quae remota sunt a sensibus nostris, quoniam testimonio nostro scire non possumus, de his alios testes requirimus, eisque credimus, a quorum sensibus remota esse vel fuisse non credimus<sup>44</sup> (*Oxon. III, d. 24, q. un., f. 167r, b; n. 13, XV, 44a*).

Thus we find that all certitude, whether of actual or past, of present or absent things and facts, rests in the final analysis on evident knowledge.

## 2. Conditions for Evident Knowledge on the Part of the Subject

### *Evident knowledge must be distinct*

We have seen that according to Scotus' definition evident knowledge must be *distinct*. How is this to be understood? In the *Reportatio* Scotus describes distinct and evident knowledge as a consequence or effect of a distinct presence of the object:

Objectum naturale est in se et distincte praesens...et ideo movet ad notitiam distinctam et evidentem ex evidentia objecti (*Rep. Exam. prol. q. 2, f. 8r; cf. Rep. Par. ibid., n. 18, XXII, 43b*).

It is unlikely that the expressions *distincte praesens* and *distincta notitia* are taken here in the strict sense of a definition of the object, i.e., in the sense of a distinct subjective apprehension of all the essential components of the object. This would contradict many of Scotus' statements regarding the evidence of propositions composed of terms known confusedly.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, no definition of the terms is required for evident knowledge of contingent propo-

43. Cf. *Oxon. III, d. 23, q. un., n. 11; XV, 17a; d. 38, q. un., n. 3; 865b*.

44. Cf. St. Augustine, *De videndo Deo*, n. 5; PL 33, col. 598.

45. Vide *infra*, Part II, chap. I.

sitions. In fact, what distinguishes contingent propositions from necessary propositions is precisely that they are known, not through analysis of their terms, but through direct and immediate contact with the object. How, then, is the word *distinct* to be understood in the present context?

An attentive examination of a few related texts has convinced us that Scotus does not always take the words *distincta notitia* in the sense of a *notitia per definitionem*. He frequently gives them a less strict signification. Thus, when speaking of our knowledge of God he states that we do not apprehend Him by a distinct concept, but merely under certain general notions, such as concepts *common* to God and creatures.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, he says that a perfect artist knows distinctly beforehand every detail of his work, whereas a less perfect artist has only a *general* or *vague* idea of what he is going to produce.<sup>47</sup> These and many other passages indicate that *distincta cognitio* is not always a *cognitio definitiva* in opposition to a *cognitio non-definitiva*. It can also have the sense of *undetermined* knowledge as against *determined knowledge*. In other words, distinct knowledge can mean the grasping of a particular or individual object, as opposed to the apprehension of the same object in a more or less vague or universal way.<sup>48</sup> At times Scotus contrasts the *distincta cognitio* with the *indistincta* or *imperfecta cognitio*. In this sense a cognition is distinct if the object is grasped in its own proper form and shape, so as to be discerned from every other object:

Una intellectione perfecta et distincta existente in intellectu, multae intellectiones indistinctae et imperfectae possunt inesse. Patet in exemplo de visu, qui in pyramide et infra basim videt unum punctum in cono distincte; et tamen in eadem pyramide et infra eandem basim videt

46. Oxon. I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 15r, b; n. 8, VIII, 408a: "Ex creaturis possumus cognoscere Deum esse, saltem in rationibus *generalibus*; subdit ibi...de cognitione Dei sub rationibus *communibus* convenientibus sibi et creaturis... Quod autem non loquatur de cognitione actuali et *distincta* Dei patet..."

47. *Ibid.*, f. 17r, a; n. 24, 460a: "Artifex perfectus *distincte* cognoscit omne agendum antequam fiat... Contra istam instatur de arte, quod ars *universalis* sufficit..."

48. Oxon. I, d. 3, q. 3, f. 28r, b; n. 3, IX, 189b: "Desiderium naturale est in intellectu...cognoscente causam in *universali*...ad cognoscendum illam in particulari et *distincte*."



multa imperfecte et indistincte (*Oxon.* II, d. 42, qq. 1-5, n. 10; XIII, 460b).<sup>49</sup>

It follows that an object is distinctly present if it shows a sufficiently sharp delineation against the surrounding objects, so that it can be clearly or distinctly perceived in the sense described above. Every object, therefore, which is more or less "mixed" with other objects so that its shape and contours cannot be distinguished from them, is not distinctly but indistinctly present. This indistinct presence prevents a distinct apprehension of the object. As a consequence evident knowledge of the same object is also excluded. Needless to say, the distinctness of a perception, whether sensible or intellectual, very often depends not so much on the object itself as on the higher or lower degree of attention on the part of the apprehending subject to one rather than to another aspect of the object present.<sup>50</sup>

#### D. EVIDENCE, THE SOURCE OF SUBJECTIVE CERTITUDE.

##### 1. *Necessary Apprehension*

Since the intellect is a natural faculty, i.e., a faculty that acts of necessity and not on free determination, it is clear that the intellect, when confronted with a proportionate object as described above, will be forced to apprehend it. All that is required for such a necessary apprehension is that the mentioned object be present to the intellect:

Concedo quod..intellectus naturali necessitate videat objectum prae-sens proportionatum...Neque etiam illa necessitas videndi est simpliciter necessitas, sed tantummodo necessitas si objectum praesens noveat (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 6, f. 279v, a; n. 9, XXI, 187b-188a).

This necessary reaction to a present and proportionate object is a consequence of the principle that every cause that is sufficient to produce an effect will produce it as soon as it is put in contact with a proportionate recipient of that effect:

49. This text is absent from the *Ass. Ms.* The question from which we are quoting belongs to those parts of the *Oxonienae* that are not in Scotus' *Ordinatio* in its original form, but were supplied later from other works of Scotus. Vide Carl Bal-ić, O.F.M., *Relatio a Commissione Scotistica exhibita Capitulo Generali Fratrum Minorum Assissii A. D. 1939* (Rome, 1939), pp. 141 ff.

50. Cf. *Oxon.* II, d. 42, q. 4, n. 11; XIII, 461b.

Illud quod sufficienter est in actu primo respectu alterius<sup>51</sup> effectus potest illum causare in receptivo proportionato et approximato (*Oxon.* II, d. 9, q. 2, f. 127r, b; n. 15, XII, 446b).

The objects of knowledge play the role of true causes in the process of cognition. Every object sufficiently present to the human intellect, whether in a sensible or in an intelligible species, produces the most perfect effect of which it is capable. In other words, it produces an effect adequate to itself, or a proper concept, as well as a concept of everything essentially or virtually contained in the object:

Objectum quodcumque, sive relucens in phantasmate, sive in specie intelligibili cum intellectu agente vel possibili cooperante, secundum ultimum suae virtutis facit, sicut effectum sibi adaequatum, conceptum suum proprium, et conceptum omnium essentialiter vel virtualiter inclusorum in eo (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 26r, a; n. 9, IX, 19b).

While describing the objective causality in the act of knowledge, Scotus does not overlook the activity of the intellect. As is well known, the Franciscan Doctor describes the act of cognition as the result of a double causality, viz., of the object and of the intellect, the former being subordinated to the latter. The same is the case with evident knowledge. Evident knowledge is not the result of the object alone, but of the object together with the intellect.<sup>52</sup> Any intellect faced with an objective evidence (i.e., with an object that is intelligible and proportioned to the intellect) reacts necessarily and to the utmost of its power to that evidence.<sup>53</sup> The intellect apprehends the object in the same measure as it manifests itself. Acting, as it does, in the manner of a non-free agent, the intellect is directly determined by the objective state of affairs, and it is not in its power to choose to apprehend one aspect of the object in preference to another:

Cum intellectus de se sit potentia naturalis et non libera, agente objecto, intellectus agit quantum potest; ergo si objectum ex parte sui

51. *Alicujus Viv.*

52. Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 7, n. 20 ss; IX, 361a ss.

53. Note that in the present state the human intellect does not always react to the utmost of its power. For by divine disposition its activity is limited to certain objects only. Cf. A. Wolter, "Duns Scotus on the Natural Desire for the Supernatural" in *The New Scholasticism*, XXIII (1949), pp. 290-294. However, the human intellect does react in the described manner to all objects proportionate to it.



agit manifestando...non est in potestate intellectus ut videat aliquid ostensum et aliquid non videat<sup>54</sup> (*Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 2, f. 11r, a; n. 9, VIII, 334b-335a).

As Belmond<sup>55</sup> writes, "the affirmation of being, in virtue of its very presence, bars the alternative, 'being is or is not' as out of place. For the presence of being to itself and to the mind gives rise to the affirmation of the same presence. Unable to escape the obsession of that presence, the mind, whether willingly or unwillingly, is compelled to surrender to evidence. Hence proceeds the highest degree of certitude....When we say: 'I am, the sun is, these flowers are,' we undoubtedly express the truth. For we assert nothing but what is evident at first sight, viz., the presence of being." In addition to underscoring the role of the object in evident knowledge Belmond's remarks also reveal two further effects of evidence, viz., necessary assent and absolute certitude.

## 2. Necessary Assent

Just as the apprehension of truth is determined by evidence, so also the assent which immediately follows in the intellect is determined by objective evidence of truth as perceived by the intellect:

Intellectus assentit cuilibet vero secundum evidentiam ipsius veri<sup>56</sup> quam natum est facere de se in intellectu (*Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 1, f. 10r, b; n. 6, VIII, 311a).

The intellect assents to truth according as the latter manifests itself in the thing, or according to the evidence of the thing. If objective evidence is conclusive the intellect is compelled to give its assent. It is not in the power of the intellect to regulate the intensity of its assent which is necessarily in strict proportion to the evidence or intelligibility of the object:

Non est in potestate intellectus firmiter vel minus firmiter assentire vero, sed tantum secundum proportionem ipsius veri moventis intellectum (*ibid.*).

In this the assent of the intellect differs profoundly from the assent of the will. While the assent of the intellect is irresistibly

54. Aliquid.../ *om. Ass. Ms.*

55. Séraphin Belmond, O.F.M., "Le fondement de la certitude" in *Etudes Françaises*, LI (1939), p. 415.

56. *Rei Viv.*

determined by objective evidence, the will has the power to assent with more or less intensity to its object (the good), and this regardless of the imperfection or perfection of knowledge. This difference of assent is due to the fact that the will, contrary to the intellect, is a free potency<sup>57</sup> which is not determined by external factors. It is entirely free to adhere to a higher or lower good:<sup>58</sup>

In potestate voluntatis est intensius assentire bono, vel non assentire, licet imperfectius viso (*ibid.*).

Nec est assensus similis hinc inde, quia necessitas est in intellectu propter evidentiam causantem assensum vel propter evidentiam objecti necessario causantis assensum in intellectu; non autem bonitas aliqua objecti causat necessario assensum voluntatis, sed voluntas libere assentit cuilibet bono et ita libere assentit maiori bono sicut minori (*Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 4, f. 12v, b-13r, a; n. 16, VIII, 372a-b).

The necessity of assent on the part of the intellect is particularly apparent in propositions that are evident in virtue of their own terms, and in conclusions derived from such propositions. Here, more than anywhere, the strict proportion between subjective assent and objective evidence is apparent:

Non est in potestate intellectus moderari assensum suum veris, quae apprehendit; nam quantum veritas principiorum ex terminis, vel conclusionum ex principiis, tantum oportet assentire propter carentiam libertatis (*Oxon.* II, d. 6, q. 2, f. 123r, a; n. 11, XII, 355b).<sup>59</sup>

The character of the evidence of principles and conclusions will be discussed at greater length in the second part of this dissertation.

### 3. Infallible Certitude

The necessary assent to evidence is accompanied by certitude. Certitude is a quality of knowledge which excludes deception and doubt. In other words, it excludes both objective falsity or error, and such modes of knowledge that fail to produce a subjective assurance of actual possession of truth:

Certitudo nata est inesse intellectui de actu suo excludens non

57. Scotus calls it a "potentia libera per essentiam." *Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 4, n. 9; VIII, 359a.

58. Cf. J. Auer, *Die menschliche Willensfreiheit im Lehrsystem des Thomas v. Aquin und Johannes Duns Scotus* (Munich, 1938), pp. 238-254. For parallel passages see: *Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 3, n. 2; VIII, 344c-345a; also q. 4, n. 9; 359a; *Metaph.* IX, q. 15, n. 4; VII, 609a.

59. Cf. also *Oxon.* II, d. 7, q. un., n. 27; XII, 407b s.



tantum deceptionem sed etiam dubitationem (*Quodl.* q. 17, n. 11; XXVI, 220b).

By characterizing certitude as a quality of knowledge Scotus does not identify certitude with subjective assurance. Certitude is not merely a subjective disposition, or a feeling of security resulting from the possession of truth or from what is considered to be the truth. Such feelings may accompany the act of knowledge. But they are not the only distinctive mark of certitude. For a feeling of security does not necessarily guarantee the knowledge of truth. And truth is an essential condition for genuine certitude, as is clear from the cited description of certitude. Such a subjective state may easily be the result of illusions of the senses, of fallacious reasonings, of mistakes on the part of relating witnesses, and other similar deceptions and errors. According to Scotistic teaching, only that knowledge is certain which is capable of rendering account of its conformity with the objective order of things. In other words, only that knowledge is certain which is true and which realizes that it is true:

Certitudo numquam est in apprehendendo verum, nisi talis sciat illud esse verum quod apprehendit (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 12; VII, 58a).

In the *Quodlibeta*, Scotus shows that the same relation that constitutes the truth of knowledge, viz., the "relatio mensurabilis ad mensuram" is also responsible for certitude. To say that something is measured is equivalent to saying that the intellect is made certain of the size or quantity of the measured thing through something else. "To be measured" implies a relation both to the intellect which is made certain, and to the measure by means of which certitude is procured:

Aliquid mensurari est intellectum de ejus quantitate determinata per aliud certificari, ita quod mensurari importat respectum ad intellectum cui fit certitudo, et ad mensuram per quam fit certitudo (*Quodl.* q. 13, n. 12; XXV, 525b).

Scotus is here using the language of Aristotle<sup>60</sup> who compares the relation of the knowable to the knower with that of the measurable to its measure. The meaning of the figure is clear. If the knowledge

60. *Metaphysics* V, chap. 15; 1020b, 26-32: "Things are relative...as the measurable to the measure, and the knowable to knowledge, and the perceptible to perception."

we have of a thing measures up with the thing itself, then our knowledge not only is true but it also produces genuine certitude in virtue of its very truth. In other words, certitude is the effect of the conformity of knowledge with the thing known.

The objective character of certitude is also stated (at least implicitly) in the question on the univocity of being where it is said that certitude cannot be had of anything false. Scotus observes that the ancient philosophers who admitted of a first principle (whether they considered it to be fire or water or some other element) were certain that this first principle was a being. But they were not certain whether this being was created or uncreated, first or not first in the order of being. Scotus maintains that no philosopher could have been certain that anyone of the named elements was the first being. For if he had been, he would have been certain of something false, and what is false is not knowable.<sup>61</sup> Nor could anyone of them have been certain that his principle was *not* the first being. On the contrary, the ancient philosophers would not have posited their principles as first beings:

Quilibet Philosophus fuit certus illud quod posuit primum principium esse ens, puta unus de igne, et alius de aqua, certus erat quod erat ens... non autem fuit certus quod esset ens creatum vel increatum, primum vel non primum. Non enim erat certus quod erat primum, quia tunc fuisset certus de falso, et falsum non est scibile; nec quod erat ens non primum, quia tunc non posuisset oppositum (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 25v, b; n. 6, IX, 18b).

That this text contains a confirmation of our assertion that Scotus' concept of certitude is essentially objective can be shown thus. On the one hand, Scotus says of the Ancients that they posited one of the aforementioned elements as first principle; on the other hand, he states that they were not certain it was first, although they pretended that one or the other of their principles was first. Scotus implies that they could not have been certain of this, for if they had been, then they would have been certain of something false; something false, however, cannot produce genuine certitude, since in any false cognition an essential element of certitude is absent,

61. It seems that the phrase "Falsum non est scibile" is not to be understood as if that which is false is not at all knowable, but rather that it is not knowable with genuine certainty such as it results from a true *scientia*.



viz., the *exclusio deceptionis*. Scotus does not deny, therefore, that these thinkers may have been subjectively convinced that what they considered to be the first principle was such in fact. A subjective conviction, however, is not yet a guarantee of truth which in Scotus' mind is required in order that genuine certitude may be had.

A further confirmation of the objective character of certitude is found in a passage where Scotus writes that the intellect can "in some way" apprehend contradictory propositions, i.e., as long as the contradiction remains hidden to it. But he adds that the intellect cannot conceive them with certainty:

Potest dici...quod contradictoria latentia, quamdiu non percipitur contradictio evidens in eis, possunt aliquo modo apprehendi ab intellectu, non tamen certitudinaliter (*Oxon.* II, d. 1, q. 3, f. 99v, b; n. 15, XI, 79a).

The remark, "quamdiu non percipitur contradictio evidens in eis," suggests the reason for the absence of certitude. One of the contradictory statements is false, and therefore, although they may be apprehended as being both true at one and the same time, this is due to the fact that the contradiction involved in the statements is not perceived by the intellect. Since the illusion, however, must sooner or later come to light, it follows that the temporary conviction produced by it cannot be considered as genuine certitude, for it is not the result of objective truth.

His insistence on the objective character of certitude notwithstanding, Scotus does not exclude its functions as a subjective qualification of knowledge. The very definition of certitude bears witness to this fact. Inasmuch as certitude excludes doubt it can safely be called a qualification of the subjective act of assent. Scotus repeatedly hints at the intensity and firmness of the act of knowledge in connection with its certitude.<sup>62</sup> Such expressions unmistakably refer to the subjective act of assent. This is particularly true in reference to first principles, the certitude of which the Franciscan Doctor so energetically defends. For to these principles the intellect assents without any doubt whatsoever:

62. Cf. *Oxon.* II, d. 6, q. 2, n. 11; XII, 355b; III, d. 24, q. un., n. 17; XV, 47b; *Quodl.* q. 17, n. 11; XXVI, 220a.

Intellectus virtute sui et terminorum assentiet indubitanter isti complexioni (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, a; n. 8, IX, 175b).<sup>63</sup>

The subjective aspects, therefore, are not excluded from Scotus' concept of certitude. In point of fact, it is one of the specific functions of certitude to assure the intellect of the truth of the cognitive acts. Since true cognitions alone, however, can produce a lasting subjective assurance, it is necessary that they be true in themselves. Perfect certitude, therefore, contains an objective and a subjective element, the latter being produced by the former. In other words, perfect certitude can be had only in reference to propositions which are both true in themselves and known as true. This is Scotus' genuine doctrine, as it can be seen from a few texts where he stresses the subjective aspects of certitude, i.e., the firmness of assent as opposed to those states of mind where an imperfect cognition of truth leaves the intellect in doubt or produces a merely opinionative assent:

Certitudo enim nata est inesse intellectui de actu suo excludens non tantum deceptionem sed etiam dubitationem. Et hoc non est nisi intellectus percipiat id a quo actus habet quod sit certus, quia si nihil potest percipere unde sit certus, videtur quod possit dubitare (*Quodl.* q. 17, n. 11; XXVI, 220b).

The possibility of doubt remains as long as the intellect does not perceive the very foundation or basis of certitude. In other words, the intellect cannot be certain except by apprehending the truth of its knowledge:

Certitudo numquam est in apprehendendo verum, nisi talis sciat illud esse verum quod apprehendit (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 12; VII, 58a).

Even a first principle, Scotus remarks, would fail to produce certitude if the intellect were to overlook its truth:

Si opinando apprehendam primum principium, licet illud quod verum est necessario apprehendam, tamen non sum certus (*ibid.*).

The most important question, however, still remains to be answered: how can the intellect ascertain the truth of its own knowledge? Scotus tries to solve the problem by an appeal to reflection. Truth, he thinks, can be ascertained by comparing the relation expressed in the proposition with the simple concepts. If there is conformity or agreement between proposition and simple concepts, then the proposition is true:

63. Cf. *Metaph.* I, q. 4, *passim*; VII, 51a ss.



Neutra veritas<sup>64</sup> est in intellectu objective,<sup>65</sup> nisi reflectente se super actum suum, comparando illum ad objectum (*Metaph.* VI, q. 3, n. 6; VII, 338b).

Objecta conceptus complexi<sup>66</sup> quae sunt extrema...mendant illum conceptum complexum, cui esse priori conceptum complexum conformari est verum esse, difformari est falsum esse... (*loc. cit.*, n. 9, 340b-341a).

Scotus is well aware of the difficulties that can be raised against this solution. Among the objections he raises against himself he even anticipates Montaigne's famous diallelus.<sup>67</sup> Another weighty argument is the following. In simple concepts things are perceived *absolute*, i.e., irrespective of any actual or possible relationship. How can the relation expressed in the proposition be ascertained through comparison with such simple apprehensions?

Si converto ad rem nude conferendo, per hoc non potero iudicare de veritate compositionis, quae est actus collativus (*ibid.*, 341a).

In his answer Scotus adduces the argument of virtual inclusion. The composition formulated by the knower, he observes, is preceded by a mutual inclusion (or "natural identity") of the extremes. To be true, the act of the intellect must be in agreement with that natural inclusion as with its measure:<sup>68</sup>

Complexum est verum quia complexionem quae est a ratione praecedit naturaliter identitas extremorum; et alia habitudo virtualiter inclusa in ipsis, cui actum rationis conformari ut mensurae, est ipsum verum esse (*ibid.*, 341b).

Hence, Scotus, in the final analysis, makes certitude dependent on immediate contact with the object of knowledge. He believes that the object has an intrinsic capacity of making itself known. This must be admitted if we are to have any true knowledge at all. Indeed, the only means of avoiding complete scepticism is to stop at some sort of irreducible factor of truth and certitude. For as we have seen, in order to obtain perfect truth, we must make the act of composition or division the object of a new act or reflection, which examines whether or not the composition or division renders the

64. Scotus distinguishes two *veritates*; the *prima veritas* is that of simple apprehension; the *secunda veritas* is that of compositions or divisions.

65. *Objective* in medieval language, is equivalent to the modern *subjective*.

66. *Conceptus complexus* is here taken in the sense of proposition.

67. *Loc. cit.*, n. 7; 339a-b.

68. Cf. Boehner, "Ockham's Theory of Truth" in *Franciscan Studies*, V (1945), pp. 150 ff.

objective state of affairs. This new act either leads to the unquestionable possession of truth or not. If not, another reflection must follow, after which the same dilemma will again be posed. Hence we must choose between two alternatives: either falling back on an infinite regress - which would mean scepticism - or stopping at an ultimate and unquestionable criterion of truth. Scotus maintains that there is such an absolutely reliable foundation for truth and certitude which needs no justification other than itself. This criterion is what he calls evidence.

#### 4. *Evidence is at the Basis of All Truth and Certitude*

Certitude, according to Scotus, is had only in acts of cognition strictly proper to the intellect, i.e., in affirmative and negative judgments:

Certitudo proprie non est nisi circa compositionem et divisionem, quae ad intellectum tantum proprie pertinet (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 14; VII, 59a).

Scotus gives an exhaustive enumeration of the various classes of propositions in which true and infallible knowledge may be had on the basis of objective evidence. In order to apprehend the truth of a proposition, he explains, we must know that it expresses the relation which exists between its extremes. The apprehension of this conformity between proposition and terms differs from proposition to proposition just as the relations between the extremes themselves differ from case to case. Sometimes the conformity is in the very nature of the extremes and not in something prior to them; sometimes it is perceived as included in something prior to the proposition; sometimes, finally, it is seen neither in the nature of the terms, nor through inclusion, but by means of an external cause which conjoins or separates the terms:

Dico quod complexionem cognosco esse veram, cognoscendo conformitatem ejus ad illam habitudinem virtualiter inclusam in extremis, quae quandoque includitur in extremis ex natura extremorum, non per aliud prius; quandoque per aliud prius includens; quandoque nullo modo ex natura terminorum vel includentium ipsos, sed a causa extrinseca conjungente ipsa vel disjungente (*Metaph.* VI, q. 3, n. 10; VII, 341b).

Accordingly, Scotus distinguishes three ways of knowing truth, viz., principles of demonstration, conclusions derived from principles of demonstration, and contingent propositions:



Primo modo est in principio demonstrationis. Secundo modo in conclusione... Tertio modo est in propositione contingente (*ibid.*).

In explaining the principles of demonstration Scotus points out that the extremes of these principles have the property of making their relation known at once and by themselves to the intellect. As soon as the intellect unites these terms in a judgment, it sees the conformity of its act to the relation existing between the extremes:

Itaque in primo modo extrema absolute intellecta, statim nata sunt facere ex se in intellectu illius notitiam habitudinis ipsorum, sicut et alia absoluta relationis consequentis; quando ergo intellectus conjungit terminos illos componendo, statim *videt* conformitatem actus sui ad illam habitudinem quam prius natura habuit notam ex terminis (*ibid.*).

In conclusions, however, - and in this they differ from first principles - something prior is needed in which the truth of the conclusion is intuited. For in formulating a conclusion, the intellect does not perceive the conformity of its act with the objective relation between the terms except by first perceiving the relation as it is present between the terms in the premises:

Quando autem componit terminos conclusionis non videt illum actum esse conformem habitudini reali terminorum, donec *videat* illam habitudinem terminorum, cujus notitia non fuit impressa sibi ex terminis conclusionis, nec imprimitur nisi ex notitia habitudinis terminorum principii quae includit illam (*ibid.*, 342a).

In contingent propositions the conformity between the act of the intellect and the objective relation between the terms cannot be seen unless the relation between the terms is apprehended in reality, i.e., in things as they really exist. For, since the relation between the extremes is brought about by an extrinsic cause, it exists only insofar as the extremes have a real existence, and never insofar as they are considered as mere concepts of the mind. Hence, in order to formulate a true judgment about contingent things the intellect must be able to see the extremes as they are united or separated in reality:

Quando autem componit terminos propositionis contingentis, non videt actum esse conformem, nisi *videndo* habitudinem terminorum in re, quia causa extrinseca si facit eam, facit circa terminos ut in re, non ut in conceptu, et tunc oportet *videre* intellectualiter terminos in re conjungi vel dividi (*ibid.*).

The reader will have noticed that, in spite of their differences, the three kinds of knowledge have this in common, that in each one

of them the conformity between proposition and terms is due to a *visio* of the relation. The term "videre" expresses here the reaction of the knowing intellect to the evidence of the relation between the terms and to the evidence of the present object. Hence there is no doubt that we are here in the presence of three cases of evident knowledge.

It must be added, however, that Scotus does not intend herewith to ascribe the same degree of scientific certitude to each and every one of the aforementioned kinds of knowledge. He constantly distinguishes between the scientific value of necessary and contingent propositions. For Scotus as well as for Aristotle,<sup>69</sup> the ideal of knowledge is that in which certitude is produced by objects that are not only evident but necessarily evident. In fact, any proposition, in order to be strictly scientific, must have a necessary object. Only necessary objects can yield a knowledge which is certain and valid everywhere and at all times.

Considerably less perfect is our knowledge of those contingent propositions for which we have to rely mainly or exclusively on the data of the external senses.<sup>70</sup> Contingent things, as the term implies, can exist or not exist. They are subject to more or less unexpected changes; moreover, they often lack the necessary proportion to our limited sense-faculties. Therefore, all knowledge based on the external senses as its exclusive source of information is not only contingent or non-necessary, but is frequently of a very questionable character, at least as far as the *sensibilia communia* are concerned. It was Scotus' awareness of these shortcomings of sense-cognition that induced him to give a remarkably prominent place to the privileged certainty proper to intellectual and introspective knowledge. On the basis of these two kinds of absolutely infallible cognitions he tries to correct the deficiencies of sense knowledge. Thus the self-evident principles furnish him with a re-

69. *Posterior Analytics* I, chap. 6; 74b 6-75a 37.

70. We want to stress the words "on the data of *external senses*" because for Scotus there is a category of contingent propositions which are as evident and certain as the first principles themselves. We are referring to the propositions concerned with subjective internal acts and states of which we have a direct or intuitive cognition. Cf. Day, *op. cit.*, pp. 123 ff.



liable basis both for his theory of induction, and for the appraisal and correction of conflicting sense perceptions. Introspection, on the other hand, is assigned a still more fundamental role, namely, that of warranting the subjective certainty of the very principles of knowledge.

The evidence of the principles or self-evident propositions will be studied in the first two chapters of Part II of this dissertation. In the concluding chapter of this part we shall present a brief analysis of the evidence proper to conclusions. Introspective evidence will be considered in the first chapter of Part III. The remaining chapters of this last part will be devoted to an examination of the various functions which intellectual and introspective evidence are called to perform in the different provinces of knowledge.

PART TWO  
EVIDENCE OF PRINCIPLES  
AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER I  
DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION  
OF SELF-EVIDENT PROPOSITIONS

A. DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRINCIPLES

Aristotle, when speaking of *immediate propositions*, distinguishes between the *axiom* "which the pupil must know if he is to learn anything whatever," and the *thesis* which, "though it is not susceptible of proof by the teacher, yet ignorance of it does not constitute a total bar to progress on the part of the pupil."<sup>1</sup> No essential difference is found between these two Aristotelian propositions, since both are known in an immediate manner, i.e., through no other proposition prior to them.<sup>2</sup>

In like manner, Scotus makes use of two denominations when referring to principles of sciences, namely, *first principles* (*prima principia* and *self-evident propositions* (*propositiones per se notae*). Here also, no essential difference can be established, for both of these propositions are evident in virtue of their terms alone.<sup>3</sup> This accounts for the fact that the expression "self-evident proposition" is often applied to first principles, and vice versa. However, just as Aristotle distinguishes between axiom and thesis according to their degree of accessibility, so we can also distinguish between Scotus' principles of science according as they are known with a greater or lesser effort. The *prima principia*, which in general seem to be identical with the axioms or "basic and common truths" of

1. *Posterior Analytics* I, chap. 2; 72a, 15-18.

2. *Loc. cit.*, 72a, 5-7.

3. That there is no essential difference between the two kinds of propositions is clear from the following text where Scotus uses the terms "propositio per se nota" and "principia prima" synonymously: "Propositio per se nota non est exclusiva notitiae terminorum, quia prima principia cognoscimus inquantum terminos cognoscimus" (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, a; n. 2, VIII, 396a).



Aristotle,<sup>4</sup> are presupposed in, and applicable to, every science. They must be known to everyone who wants to study any particular science. They are the most immediate, the highest, and most universal rules of all intellectual activity. For the same reason they are easily accessible to every normal mind.

Not so with the *propositiones per se notae*. These need not be known in their entirety to every student. Only those must be known which constitute the principles of the particular science in which the student is actually engaged. It is in this sense that they are often called first principles, in spite of what has been said about the more general character of the *prima principia*. It should be noted, however, that Scotus, although he uses the two denominations interchangeably, does not intend to attribute the same degree of accessibility to the first principles and to the self-evident propositions. First principles (in the more universal sense of the word) are, as a rule, easily grasped even by the more limited minds, because the meaning of their terms is apprehended without any particular effort. The terms of self-evident propositions, however, admit of various degrees of distinctness, and may, therefore, be known only to a few.<sup>5</sup>

All these distinctions, however, do not reach the internal structure of the first principles and self-evident propositions. For this reason we shall treat them conjointly as to their constitution and evidence.

#### B. DEFINITION OF A SELF-EVIDENT PROPOSITION

Like most of the Scholastics, Scotus discusses the problems connected with the self-evident proposition in his question on the cognoscibility of the existence of God. This question is found in the *Opus Oxoniense* under the title: "Utrum aliquid infinitum esse sit per se notum, ut Deum esse."<sup>6</sup> In addition to this basic question

4. *Loc. cit.*, chap. 11; 77a, 24-33.

5. The preceding considerations are meant to be an introduction to Scotus' treatment of self-evident propositions. It will soon become clear that they are sufficiently substantiated by Scotus' own texts.

6. *Ass. MS. Lib. I*, d. 2, q. 2; ff. 14v, a-18r, b; *Viv. VIII*, 395a-486a. In the Vivès edition the title reads: "An aliquod infinitum, sive an Deum esse sit per se notum?"

we shall make extensive use of the important parallel texts of the *Reportatio Examinata*.<sup>7</sup>

Before giving his definition of a self-evident proposition, Scotus explains the meaning of the expression *per se* when used in this connection. When it is said that a proposition is known *per se* this does not mean to exclude any and every causality. It is clear that we cannot dispense with the knowledge of the terms, for no proposition is knowable except through a previous apprehension of the terms. The terms of self-evident propositions, however, differ from those of any other proposition in that they are not merely a necessary but also a sufficient cause for the formulation of the proposition. No other causality apart from the terms is needed to produce the evidence of these propositions:

Primo assigno rationem propositionis per se notae. Et dico sic: cum dicitur propositio per se nota non excluditur per ly *per se* quaecumque causa, quia non excluduntur termini propositionis. Nulla enim propositio nota est exclusa notitia terminorum. Ergo propositio per se nota non est exclusiva notitiae terminorum, quia prima principia cognoscimus inquantum terminos cognoscimus; sed excluditur quaecumque causa et ratio quae est extra per se conceptum terminorum propositionis per se notae (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, a; n. 2, VIII, 396a).

Hence *per se* does not indicate an innate knowledge in the human intellect, i.e., a knowledge impressed on the mind without any activity on its part. Scotus does not admit of propositions or of simple apprehensions which are innate to the intellect. All our knowledge starts somehow from sense perception. Not even first principles are grasped unless their terms are received from the sensible world without:

Intellectus noster...ante omnia intelligere est sicut tabula rasa (*Oxon.* II, d. 23, q. un., n. 5; XIII, 160b).<sup>8</sup>

Pro tanto (principia) dicuntur nobis naturaliter nota sive cognita, quia praescita compositione simplicium terminorum, statim ex lumine naturali intellectus acquiescit vel adhaeret illi veritati; tamen cognitio terminorum acquiritur ex sensibilibus (*Metaph.* II, q. 1, n. 2; VII, 97a).

Sense perception, however, is in no way the *cause* of the *propositio per se nota*. It is simply a *conditio sine qua non* by which the terms become subjectively known. This sense activity need not

7. *Cod. Vienn.* 1453, Lib. I, d. 3, q. 2, ff. 21v-22r.

8. We give here only the version of the Vivès edition, since this question is missing in the Assisi Ms.



even be true in order to produce a true principle in the mind. "Therefore," writes Mastrius de Meldula,<sup>9</sup> "the expression *per se* excludes everything by which the intellect would be moved, as through a middle term, to give its assent to the aforesaid proposition. As soon as the intellect apprehends the terms of that proposition, it knows evidently their mutual connection by virtue of the apprehension. In this sense the proposition is said to be evident by its own proper terms."

The only constituent of the self-evidence of a proposition, therefore, are the terms of which it is constituted. Scotus specifies the function of the terms in his definition of a self-evident proposition:

Dicitur igitur propositio *per se* nota quae *per nihil aliud extra terminos proprios* qui sunt aliquid ejus<sup>10</sup> habet veritatem evidentem (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, a; n. 2, VIII, 396a).

Hic primo ostendo quid est propositio *per se* nota, scilicet quae est quae habet evidentem veritatem ex suis terminis ut sui sunt. Unde in propositione *per se* nota non excluditur terminorum notitia, quia nulla propositio est nota sine cognitione terminorum; sed in ratione causae vel veritatis evidētia illius propositionis *per se* notae excluditur quaecumque alia veritas complexa. Illa est enim nota *per se* quae non habet evidentiam ex alia propositione notiori in veritate, sed ex suis terminis intrinsecis ut sui sunt (*Rep. Exam.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 21v).

According to these texts a proposition is self-evident if it is known in virtue of its terms alone; or as the *Reportatio* puts it, if it is evidently known to be true "*ex suis terminis ut sui sunt.*" This shows the difference between the self-evidence of propositions and conclusions. Conclusions are evident if deduced from evident premises, the truth of which is better known than that of the conclusions themselves, and which for this reason serve as a means to make the conclusions known. This is why conclusions are said to be known, not *per se* but *per aliud*; although truly evident (if deduced from evident premises), yet they are never *self-evident*. Self-evident propositions, on the contrary, are known, not by means of some higher or more evident truth, but simply and solely in virtue of the terms *ut sui sunt*, i.e., as they stand in the propo-

9. *Cursus philosophicus* (Venice, 1708), tom. I, disput. XIII, quaest. III, art. I, n. 49; pp. 359a s.

10. Quae ex terminis propriis qui sunt aliquid ejus, ut sunt ejus *Viv.*

sition, and independently of any other truth or proposition. As Mastrius remarks, a proposition is said to be known in virtue of its terms *ut sunt ejus* "when the terms are taken in the precise sense in which they are used to integrate the proposition."<sup>11</sup>

The example used by the Vivès edition to illustrate is a clear case of a perfectly self-evident proposition in the sense described. Although this example is not found in the Assisi MS it is within the Scotist line of argument. In point of fact, it is cited in the parallel text of the *Reportatio* and also occurs elsewhere in the works of the Franciscan Doctor.<sup>12</sup> The example is presented as follows:

Et (propositio per se nota) non propter aliquid aliud quod sit extra terminos proprios habet evidentiam, sed ex se tantum, ut omne totum est majus sua parte (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 2; VIII, 396a-b).

From the sole apprehension of the meaning of the terms "whole" and "part" and their comparison, the mind can immediately formulate the proposition, "Every whole is greater than its part." The mutual inclusion of the two terms is so obvious that by comparing one and the other, the mind immediately perceives their relationship, and that independently of any other factor apart from the terms themselves. The grasping of this relationship is, of course, accompanied by the apprehension of the truth of the proposition, as well as by a most certain assent in the mind. A more detailed discussion of these subjective aspects of the self-evident proposition is reserved for the next chapter.

The *propositio per se nota* has been defined as evident in virtue of its terms. In order to be able to appreciate its epistemological importance, we must first examine the nature and function of the terms.

### C. THE FUNCTION OF THE TERMS IN SELF-EVIDENT PROPOSITIONS

#### 1. *Distinct and Confused Terms*

In his description of the terms and their function in the *propositio per se nota*, Scotus begins by establishing a distinction be-

11. *Loc. cit.*, p. 360.

12. *Rep. Exam.* I, d. 3, q. 2; f. 21v-22r: "Propositio est per se nota intellectui habenti distinctam notitiam terminorum...sicut ista: omne totum est majus sua parte." Cf. also *Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 9; IX, 609a.



tween the terms which may enter a self-evident proposition. First of all, one and the same thing can be designated by two different terms, one of which represents the definition of the thing in question, while the other simply stands for the thing defined, without expressing its definition. This distinction applies both to vocal terms, or words, and to concepts in the mind which are signified by words. Thus "man" is a defined thing (*definitum*) and "rational animal" is a definition (*definitio*):

Ulterius, qui sunt illi termini proprii ex quibus debet esse evidens? - Dico quoad hoc: alius terminus est definitio et alius definitum, sive accipiantur termini pro vocibus significantibus sive pro conceptibus significatis (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, a; n. 2, VIII, 396b).

The important point to note in this text is that the term (or group of terms) which expresses the definition is not at all identical in meaning with the term which simply stands for the thing defined, even though both terms stand for, and signify, one and the same thing. This difference is brought out more emphatically in the *Reportatio*, where Scotus distinguishes between distinct and confused concepts in the self-evident proposition:

Hic primo ostendo quid est propositio per se nota, scilicet quae est quae habet evidentem veritatem ex suis terminis ut sui sunt... Et dico "ut sui sunt" vel conceptus confusi ut confuse sunt, vel distincti ut distincte sunt; non enim idem termini definitio et definitum, quia definitum prius notum est quam definitio eo quod confusum et confusa sunt prius nota...et ideo aliquid potest esse per se notum secundum unum terminum, scilicet secundum definitum quod non erit notum secundum definitionem (*Rep. Exam.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 21v).

A term is called distinct when it expresses the essential components which constitute the object. In other words, an object must be defined as to its genus and specific difference in order to be distinctly known:

Nihil concipitur distincte nisi quando concipiuntur omnia quae includuntur in ratione ejus essentiali (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 72v, a; n. 24, IX, 49b).

A term is said to be confused if it expresses a merely nominal acquaintance with the thing. In other words, a confused term stands for the thing as it is apprehended before the definition is established:

Confuse dicitur aliquid concipi quando concipitur sicut exprimitur per nomen. - Distincte quando concipitur per definitionem (*Loc. cit.*, f. 27r, b; n. 21, IX, 48a).

Therefore the phrase "confused knowledge" as used in this connection does not mean that the concept expressed by the term is blurred or unclear, but simply that its essential definition is unknown. For I can know very clearly what is a man and distinguish him from what is not a man, while still ignoring the essential definition of man.<sup>13</sup>

Scotus proves this distinction between *definitio* and *definitum* by calling attention to the different functions exercised by the two terms in the demonstrative process. According to Aristotle<sup>14</sup> the *quod quid est* or essential definition of one of the extremes of a demonstrated proposition (or conclusion) occurs as middle term in the demonstration. Thus the definition, "animal rationale," is the middle term of this syllogism: "Omne animal rationale est risibile; Homo est animal rationale; Ergo homo est risibilis." Although the conclusion differs from one of the premises (i.e., the first premise) only as the defined term differs from its definition, the premise nevertheless is self-evident, whereas the conclusion is demonstrated. Therefore, the *definitum* (*homo*) is not the same as the *definitio* (*animal rationale*); for if it were, then the proposition, "Homo est risibilis," would need no demonstration, because it would be as evident as the premise, "Animal rationale est risibile." Moreover, it would follow that the *potissima demonstratio* - the most obvious kind of demonstration - would be a fallacy, inasmuch as it would suppose as previously evident the very thing it pretends to demonstrate. Furthermore, such a "demonstration" would have only two terms. For if the *definitio* is identical with the *definitum*, then *animal rationale* and *homo* represent only one concept; this leaves *risibile* as the only other term in the syllogism. The logical consequence of the aforesaid identification, therefore, would mean nothing less than a complete repudiation of the Aristotelian concept of demonstration:

Quod probo ex primo *Posteriorum*, quia quod quid est alterius extremi est medium in demonstratione; ergo altera praemissa non differt a conclusione nisi sicut definitum differt a definitione, et tamen praemissa est principium per se notum, conclusio autem non est per se nota, sed demonstrata. Ergo quantum ad rationem propositionis per se notae alius

13. Cf. A.B. Wolter, O.F.M., *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1946), pp. 61 f.

14. *Post. Anal.* II, chap. 4; 91a, 13-16.



est conceptus definitionis<sup>15</sup> a definito; quia si idem conceptus definitionis et definiti, in demonstratione potissima esset petitio principii. Item, tunc essent ibi tantum duo termini, quod est falsum (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, a; n. 2, VIII, 396b).

The distinction between distinct and confused terms can also be proven thus. Aristotle<sup>16</sup> writes that the same relation exists between a *nomen* or word as is found between a whole and its parts. As a whole is best known to sense perception (though confusedly) so also the *nomen* is more easily grasped by the mind than the definition. For the concept of a quiddity as expressed in the *nomen* contains confusedly what the *definitio* contains distinctly through an exact analysis of the constituent parts of that quiddity. Thus it is easier to know what a circle is if it is apprehended in a more vague or general manner, than if it be presented in an essential definition:

Hoc probatur secundo sic per Aristotelem primo *Physicorum*, quod nomina sustinent ad definitionem hoc quod totum ad partes, id est, quod nomen confusum prius est notum definitione. (*ibid.*)

Another (and perhaps more convincing) argument can be drawn from the cited Aristotelian reasoning. If we admit to Aristotle that the *nomen* is known prior to the definition, then we must also admit that the *nomen* and the definition are not identical. To maintain that they are identical is to say that one and the same concept is simultaneously prior and posterior, or that it can be had and not be had at one and the same time. Actually we conceive first the confused term "man," and only after analyzing this confused concept into its essential components "rational" and "animal" do we arrive at the definition of man. In view of this successive apprehension it must be admitted that we are here in the presence of two different concepts:

Ex hoc arguitur: impossibile est eundem conceptum esse priorem et posteriorem, haberi et non haberi de eadem re; sed idem potest prius concipi secundum nomen quam secundum definitionem;<sup>17</sup> nomen autem confuse importat quod definitio distincte, quia definitio dividit in singularia; ergo conceptus quidditativus vel quidditatis ut importatur per nomen confuse est prior notus naturaliter quam conceptus ejus ut importatur distincte per definitionem; et ita alius conceptus et aliud extremum (*loc. cit.*).

This somewhat lengthy exposition of the two concepts was necessary to enable us to follow Scotus' discussion of the conditions

15. Alius terminus est definitio *Viv.*

16. *Physics* I, chap. 1; 184a 21-b 11.

17. Ex hoc.../ *om. Assisi MS.*

for self-evidence in propositions the terms of which are confused.

## 2. *Self-Evidence in Propositions with Confused Terms*

In the following texts, Scotus deals mainly with propositions composed of confusedly known terms. We must not wonder at this, for propositions with distinctly known terms present little difficulty. For the relation between the terms is brought out by a definition which analyzes the subject in terms of its essential components and thus shows the relation between subject and predicate without further effort on the part of the knower. In propositions with confused terms, however, such an essential definition is not given; therefore the relation between the terms is not always evident. Hence Scotus subjects them to close investigation, laying down the conditions by which these propositions can be called self-evident.

After recalling his distinction between confused and distinct terms and his definition of a self-evident proposition, Scotus remarks that *a proposition where the quiddity is confusedly conceived is not self-evident if we have to define quiddity first*:

Ex hoc ultra: Cum propositio sit per se nota quae ex propriis terminis habet evidentem veritatem, et alii termini sunt conceptus quidditatis distincte ut importatur per definitionem, et conceptus quidditatis confuse ut importatur per nomen, sequitur quod propositio non erit per se nota de quidditate confuse accepta, quae non est nota nisi per definitionem distincte concipiatur (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, a; n. 3, VIII, 398b).

This text must be considered in connection with those which precede and follow, lest its peculiar formulation lead us astray. Scotus says that no proposition with confused terms is self-evident if we have to give a definition of quiddity first. As Bettoni<sup>18</sup> remarks, "quiddity" may be referred to either subject or predicate or to both subject and predicate of the proposition. It has been stated that a proposition is self-evident in virtue of its own terms. Moreover, it has been proven that terms differ according as they imply a distinct quidditative concept as expressed in the definition, or as they involve a confused quidditative concept as expressed in the *nomen* or word. Hence no proposition whose subject (or predicate) needs to be defined in order to become self-evident can be considered

18. Efrem Bettoni, O.F.M., *L'ascesa a Dio in Duns Scoto* (Milan, 1943), p. 21: "Se per rendere evidente una data proposizione occorre definire, e quindi conquistare il concetto preciso di uno o di tutti e due i termini, questa proposizione non è più immediatamente evidente."



as self-evident as long as the subject is only confusedly conceived. For to say that a proposition with confused terms becomes evident only after the quiddity (of either subject or predicate, or both) is defined, is equivalent to saying that the said proposition is not self-evident in virtue of its own terms.

Scotus proceeds to adduce three arguments in support of the doctrine just exposed. The interpretation of these arguments presents some difficulty. It is our opinion that they cannot be rightly explained unless we interpret them as a threefold refutation of an objection that is implicit in the text. This is indicated by the little word "alias" which obviously aims at a real or supposed objector. In fact, Scotus' doctrine appears to be open to objection. It may be said, for instance, that even if Scotus' contention is granted that a proposition with confused terms is not self-evident as it stands, nevertheless it may be called self-evident because *it becomes self-evident as soon as the terms are defined*, or at least, because the terms are susceptible of being defined. This, it seems, is the objection Scotus has in mind in the following text (which also contains the first of the three arguments he himself produces to corroborate his own position):

Haec etiam eadem conclusio probatur: quia alias quaelibet propositio alia quae est necessaria et per se primo modo,<sup>19</sup> ut homo est animal, et corpus, usque ad substantiam, esset per se nota. Nam si ratio utriusque extremi assignatur ex rationibus extremorum distincte conceptis, apparet manifeste quod unum extremum includit alterum (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, b; n. 3, VIII, 398b-399a).

In other words, if it were true that every proposition with confused terms is to be considered self-evident because it becomes so through the definition of the terms, then every necessary proposition of the first mode would *eo ipso* be self-evident: For in all propositions of the first mode of predication the predicate is contained in the subject in such a way that, through the analysis of the subject, one arrives at the knowledge of the predicate. Hence from the standpoint of the objector it would have to be said that a proposition of the first mode, and formulated with confused terms, can be called self-evident with the same right as that in which the terms are distinct. Thus it would seem that the proposition, "Homo est animal," is to be considered to be as self-evident as the propo-

19. Quae est vera in primo modo *Viv.*

sition, "Animal rationale est risibile," in which the predicate is known as contained in the subject by reason of the distinct knowledge of the terms.

From the formulation of the text already quoted we can conclude that Scotus does not admit this reasoning. According to him, not all propositions of the first mode are *eo ipso* self-evident. They are self-evident only if it is evident *per se* (i.e., here, both necessarily and in virtue of the terms) that the component parts of the subject are actually united, as we read in another passage of the *Oxonienae*.<sup>20</sup> In the case of confused terms, however, the union of the parts is not always self-evident. True, such union can be manifested through the definition of the subject and thus a self-evident proposition may be obtained. This proposition, however, is no longer the same as before. For, if a definition is needed to render it self-evident, it is no longer known through its own terms. It follows that the inclusion of the predicate in the subject is not sufficient to make a proposition self-evident, unless this inclusion is known in virtue of the terms as they stand in the proposition. The inclusion of *animal* in *homo* is doubtless self-evident as soon as *homo* is substituted by the definition *animal rationale*. But it would be false to conclude that the proposition, "Homo est animal," is also self-evident. This proposition is not known in virtue of the terms as they appear in the proposition.<sup>21</sup>

Scotus' second argument is similar to the first. If a proposition with confused terms were to be considered self-evident because it becomes self-evident when the terms are defined, then it would follow that every proposition that is self-evident to the metaphysician - in virtue of the definition of the terms - would also be so in the special sciences. This, however, is not the case; for even though in geometry, for instance, a confused concept is sufficient for the formulation of the self-evident principle that a line is a "longitudo sine latitudine," this does not imply that the geometer as geometrician is also in a position to conceive the self-

20. I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 15r, a; n. 5, VIII, 405b: "Nihil est per se notum de conceptu non simpliciter simplici, nisi sit per se notum partes illius conceptus uniri."

21. Belmond obviously goes too far when he concludes on the basis of the text cited above that for Scotus no analytical proposition is "*nota per se*, au pied de la lettre." (*Dieu, existence et cognoscibilité*, Paris, 1913, pp. 9 f.). All Scotus says is that such propositions are not self-evident through their confused terms.



evidence of the metaphysical definition of a line. The metaphysician defines line as a "specific instance of extended quantity, in contradistinction to surface and body." However evident such a definition may be to the metaphysician, no geometrician will ever consider it as self-evident to him. For the geometrician does not apprehend the terms of a metaphysical definition in their proper or distinct meaning:

Similiter alias quaelibet propositio esset per se nota in scientiis specialibus, quam Metaphysicus posset habere per se notam ex definitionibus extremorum, quod non est verum, quia Geometer non utitur aliquibus principiis tamquam per se notis nisi quae habent evidentem veritatem ex terminis confuse conceptis, puta concipiendo lineam confuse, evidens verum est quod linea est longitudo sine latitudine, non concipiendo aliquid<sup>22</sup> distincte ad quod genus pertineat linea, sicut considerat Metaphysicus. Alias autem propositiones quas Metaphysicus posset concipere, puta quod linea est quanta<sup>23</sup> et huiusmodi, tales propositiones non habet Geometer per se notas (*ibid.*).

In his third argument, Scotus shows that a proposition with confused terms is not self-evident if it is known only with the help of a definition, by pointing out the different manner in which the predicate of a demonstrated proposition (i.e., of the conclusion of a syllogism) is known of the defined subject according to where it stands in the syllogism:

Patet ergo tertio quod vere stat demonstratio alicujus praedicati de definito cum hoc quod illud praedicatum sit per se notum de definitione, sicut habere tres est demonstrabile de triangulo, cum tamen notum sit per se de ejus definitione quod omnis figura plana, etc. Est igitur omnis et sola illa propositio per se nota quae ex terminis sic conceptis ut sunt ejus termini nata est habere evidentem veritatem complexionis (*ibid.*)<sup>24</sup>

The first premise in the demonstrative process contains as predicate the definition of the subject. And for this reason the premise

22. *Adhuc Viv.*

23. *Linea est species quantitatis continuae distincta contra superficiem et corpus Viv.*

24. *Sicut habere tres.../ om. Ass. MS.* Although we are unable, at present, to appraise the critical value of this passage, we have cited it, because of the example it contains as well as of the concise and exact summary it presents of all that has been previously treated. Moreover, in the *Reportatio* the same instance occurs, although in a somewhat modified form. Instead of referring to the concept of triangle purely and simply, it sets out from the definition of triangle *in genere* and proceeds to the particular kinds of triangle *in specie*: "Per naturam trianguli ...possumus demonstrare particulariter de figura habere tres...et de ysocele et de omni contento sub triangulo" (*Rep. Exam.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 22r).

is self-evident, or in other words, the predicate is self-evidently known of the subject. It does not follow, however, that the same predicate is self-evidently known of the confused or undefined subject. It is only through demonstration that the predicate can be made known of such a subject. This is done by means of the definition which is used as middle term, as the following syllogism shows:

Omnis figura plana tribus lineis contenta habet tres angulos aequales duobus rectis; atqui triangulus est figura tribus lineis contenta; ergo triangulus habet tres angulos aequales duobus rectis.

The definition of the triangle must first be given in order that the predicate ("habet tres...") may become known of the *definitum* (i.e., of the triangle). Hence the proposition, "Triangulus habet tres angulos aequales duobus rectis," is in no way self-evident. If it were, then all demonstrative reasoning would become superfluous. Demonstration and self-evidence being incompatible, nothing that is self-evident needs to be, or can be, demonstrated. Actually the inclusion of the predicate in the subject is not always self-evidently known through the confused concept of the subject, as the above considerations on the nature of the demonstrative process show. It is known only by means of the distinct concept of the subject as through a middle term. Therefore, no proposition with confused terms in which a definition is necessary to reveal the relationship between the terms can be considered self-evident. For it is not known *ex suis terminis ut sui sunt*.

Thus the conditions for self-evidence are clearly established. Only those propositions are self-evident which produce evident truth through their terms as found in the proposition. Or to say the same thing in other words: whether composed of distinct or confused terms, a proposition is self-evident only when, and as often as, it gives evident truth in virtue of its own distinct or confused terms as they stand in the proposition.

The detailed analysis of the three arguments enables us to avoid several misunderstandings of which Scotus' statements about the self evidence of propositions with confused terms has been the occasion. The somewhat obscure text<sup>25</sup> of the Franciscan Doctor

25. We are referring to the passage quoted *supra*, p. 137.



has given rise to two extreme interpretations. Belmond<sup>26</sup> maintains that Scotus denies self-evidence to all analytical propositions, i.e., to propositions "dont le prédicat évoque le sujet." According to Belmond, not even a definition of the terms can render such a proposition self-evident, and therefore the so-called evidence of metaphysics and other particular sciences "resteront objectivement... des inévidences;" only the "axioms" which are known through their confused terms would fall under the definition of self-evident proposition. Schmuecker,<sup>27</sup> on the contrary, thinks that (apart from propositions with irreducibly simple concepts) only those propositions whose terms are previously defined can be called self-evident. For only a definition of the subject enables the mind to apprehend the inclusion of the predicate in the subject.

Both of these interpretations seem to fall short of Scotus' conception of the self-evident proposition. By saying that a proposition with confused terms is not self-evident if we must give a distinct definition of the quiddity first, Scotus does not imply either that propositions with distinct terms are not self-evident, or that propositions with confused terms cannot be (or at least become) self-evident. All he says is that propositions with confused terms are not always self-evident, viz., if the relation between subject and predicate is not known in virtue of the confused terms as they stand in the proposition. Nothing, however, prevents such a proposition from *becoming* self-evident. For by a subsequent definition the mutual relationship of the terms may become evident.

Schmuecker remarks in a footnote<sup>28</sup> that although Scotus occasionally speaks of self-evident propositions with confused terms, this is a rather rare case, for his allusions to this subject appear to be little more than cursory remarks. And thus the case of the confused

26. S. Belmond, O.F.M., *Dieu, existence et cognoscibilité* (Paris, 1913), pp. 9 ff. For an excellent criticism of Belmond's views see P. Raymond, O.F.M. Cap., "La philosophie critique de Duns Scot et le criticisme de Kant" in *Etudes Franciscaines*, XXII (1909), pp. 536 ff. The difference in dates is no indication of a prophetic charisma on the part of Fr. Raymond. Belmond's book is a compilation of articles published from 1908 to 1913 in *Revue de Philosophie* and *Etudes Franciscaines*.

27. Rainulf Schmuecker, O.F.M., *Propositio per se nota, Gottesbeweis und ihr Verhältniss nach Petrus Aureoli* (Werl i. Westf., 1941), pp. 116 ff.

28. *Op. cit.*, note 87, p. 117.

terms is dismissed as one which has no special bearing on Scotus' synthesis of the self-evident proposition as a whole.

We cannot agree with this oversimplification. First of all, we are dealing here, not with a "rare case," but with a notion which determines and runs throughout Scotus' entire conception of the hieraschy of sciences. This conception must be understood from the old theory of sciences which the Middle Ages inherited from Aristotle.

The Aristotelian and Scholastic scheme of sciences admits of a scale of subordinating and subordinate disciplines, each of which occupies a higher or lower place, according to the greater or lesser extension of its object and principles. Thus Scotus always distinguishes between a general or universal science on the one hand, and a special or particular science on the other. The former is Metaphysics, which treats of the most universal object, Being. All the other sciences are concerned with more or less particular and limited objects of study. Metaphysics is called a general science not only because it considers all things from a higher point of view than any other science, but particularly because its principles direct, if not immediately, at least remotely and implicitly, all thinking and all the conclusions of the particular sciences. This is done through the *dignitates* or axioms, which are the most universal of the self-evident principles.

A similar relationship of subordination is also present in the particular sciences. Thus the science of optics is subordinated to geometry, and the science of music to arithmetic, because optics and music accept their principles from geometry and arithmetic. Note that it is not said that the same principles are used in both sciences but that the principles of the subordinated science are the conclusions of the subalternating science from which they derive their evidence.<sup>29</sup>

Not all the principles of the particular sciences, however, need to be taken from higher sciences. There is a second alternative, namely, the formulation of self-evident principles from concepts obtained by experience. Although their terms are confusedly known, these principles are nevertheless truly self-evident. This is what we want to make clear with the help of texts gathered from several

29. Cf. Mastrius, *Cursus philosophicus*, tom. I, disp. XII, q. 4, pp. 338 ss.



of Scotus' works. First, however, a study of the various kinds of concepts in Scotus is necessary.

Schmuecker bases his contention that only distinct terms can enter a self-evident proposition on the allegedly exhaustive subdivision of concepts into irreducibly simple concepts on the one hand, and composed concepts on the other. While the irreducibly simple concepts are distinctly apprehended by one simple glance of the intellect, the composed concepts cannot be distinctly apprehended unless they appear in the form of definitions. In other words, composed concepts must first be analyzed into their elements or parts. A distinct cognition of the parts of the concepts is indispensable for self-evidence in propositions with composed concepts, because self-evidence consists in the evident inclusion of the predicate in the subject. In order that this inclusion may become evident, it is required, first of all, that the possibility of the association of the parts of the composed subject be evident. If it is not evident, then the subject cannot possibly enter a self-evident proposition. Indeed, let it be assumed that the association were impossible; in this case the composed concept would also be impossible; it would be false in itself. But a false concept, when put together with another concept (i.e., here, with a predicate) cannot yield a true proposition. The possibility of the association of the parts of a concept is evident only if the concept appears in the form of a definition. Hence, Schmuecker concludes, a composed concept cannot enter a self-evident proposition unless it is first defined.<sup>30</sup>

According to Schmuecker, the distinct apprehension of the terms, besides guaranteeing self-evidence *ex terminis*, fulfills at the same time another function - it shows the logical immediacy of the composition. Logical immediacy, or evident inclusion of the predicate in the subject, is that characteristic which distinguishes the self-evident proposition from the conclusion. In a conclusion the relation expressed between subject and predicate is known through the intervention of a third term, whereas in the self-evident proposition the inclusion is evident immediately, i.e., in virtue of the terms alone. In the case of propositions with composed terms this immediacy can be safeguarded only by the definition of the composed terms. For it is only by ascertaining the evident association of the composing

30. *Op. cit.*, pp. 117 f.

parts that any further proof of the same association is rendered superfluous.<sup>31</sup>

As convincing as Schmuecker's expositions may appear at first sight, they rest on an incomplete evaluation of Scotus' classification of concepts. It is true that the Franciscan Doctor says in the question under discussion that in the case of composed terms no self-evident proposition can be had unless it is evident that their parts are united.<sup>32</sup> But he does not state that the evidence of association of the parts appears only in the definition. Scotus, it should be kept in mind, admits a third kind of concept, which can be apprehended by "one glance of the mind" in the same manner as the irreducible concept. Yet, this third type of concept is not irreducibly simple but composed. Let us quote Scotus' own words: "I call irreducibly simple that concept which cannot be resolved into several other concepts, e.g., the concept of being and of the ultimate differences. Simple, though not irreducibly simple, is every concept which can be apprehended by the intellect in an act of simple intellection, although it is susceptible of being broken down into several other concepts which can be conceived separately; such are, for instance, the concepts of a *definitum* or of a species."<sup>33</sup>

Conceptus simpliciter simplex est qui non est resolubilis in plures conceptus, ut conceptus entis vel ultimae differentiae. Conceptum vero simplicem, sed non simpliciter simplicem voco quicumque potest concipi ab intellectu actu simplicis intelligentiae, licet possit resolvi in plures conceptus seorsum conceptibiles, sicut est conceptus definiti vel speciei<sup>34</sup> (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 1, f. 27r, b; q. 2, n. 21; IX, 47b s).

Here, then, we are clearly told that there are concepts which are not irreducibly simple, the parts of which can be known as united without an actual definition of the terms, or in other words, without a distinct resolution into the composing parts.<sup>35</sup> To say that such

31. *Op. cit.*, pp. 118 f.

32. *Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 5; VIII, 405b: "Nihil est per se notum de conceptu non simpliciter simplici, nisi sit per se notum partes illius conceptus uniri."

33. Cf. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function*, p. 81: "A concept is said to be irreducibly simple if it is incapable of further analysis, that is to say, it cannot be broken down into two simpler concepts, one of which is determinable, the other determining."

34. *Sicut est.../ add. Viv.*

35. Cf. Wolter, *op. cit.*, p. 81: "A *simpliciter simplex*, or irreducibly simple concept is opposed, on the one hand, to a composite concept and, on the other, to those simple concepts which contain a number of intelligible elements, each of



a simple apprehension is not sufficient for the formulation of a self-evident proposition, offers little objection. For in formulating first principles, the intellect needs nothing besides the simple apprehension of the terms, which is followed by the act of composition of the terms, which in turn is followed by the assent of the intellect to the proposition thus obtained:

Primo movetur sensus ab aliquo simplici, non complexum, et a sensu moto movetur intellectus et intelligit simplicia, quod est primus actus intellectus; deinde post apprehensionem simplicium sequitur alius actus qui est componere simplicia ad invicem; post illam autem compositionem habet intellectus ex lumine naturali quod assentiat illi veritati complexorum, si illud complexum sit principium primum (*Metaph.* II, q. 1, n. 2; VII, 96b).

No more clarity is required of the concept than that which enables us to distinguish it from other concepts. That this degree of clarity is had in simple apprehension not only of irreducibly simple concepts but also of simple concepts as the ones described above, is a fact of daily experience. We can, for instance, easily distinguish the concept "man" from any other simple concept, even before knowing the essential definition of man.<sup>36</sup>

Hence distinctness must not be equated with evidence. Schmuecker seems to proceed on the supposition that evidence and distinctness are always found together, not only in the sense that everything that is distinctly conceived is evident (which might be true), but also that nothing is evident unless it is distinctly conceived. However, the very definition of the self-evident proposition excludes such identification. We have found that the expression, "ex suis terminis ut sui sunt," is precisely intended to signify that both distinct and confused terms can constitute a self-evident proposition. The doubts left by the *Oxoniense* are easily dispelled by a quotation from the *Reportatio* where Scotus writes:

Illa est enim nota per se quae non habet evidentiam ex alia propositione notiori in veritate, sed ex suis terminis intrinsicis ut sui sunt. Et dico ut sui sunt vel conceptus confusi ut confuse sunt, vel distincti ut distincti sunt...<sup>37</sup> (*Rep. Exam.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 21v).

which could be conceived distinctly but which de facto are grasped in a single act."

36. "Intelligitur aliquid per se, etiam in particulari, sed adhuc quodammodo confuse, sicut intelligo hominem antequam intelligam definitionem" (*Quodl.* q. 7, n. 7; XXV, 289b).

37. Version of *MS Merton College* 59 reads: "vel conceptus confusi ut confusi sunt, vel distincti ut distincti sunt."

That a confused concept can produce the same evidence as a distinct concept is again brought to view by a comparison between the respective function of the *definitum* and the definition in the demonstrative syllogism. A definition which appears as a middle term in the demonstration is not, as such, more evident to us than the *definitum*. It is not denied that the premise in which the definition appears is more evident *in relation to the conclusion*. For it is through the definition that the conclusion is drawn from the premises as through a middle term. It does not follow, however, that the premise which contains the definition is *more evident to us* than it was before we knew the definition. For the mutual relation between the terms of that premise is seen without the definition of the subject (at least confusedly):

Definitio est medium in demonstratione et definitum erit conclusum, et ideo dixi *ut sui sunt*, scilicet confuse, si sunt concepti confuse, et distincte, si sunt concepti distincte. Unde definitio ut est medium non est ut sic declarativum vel magis evidens quoad nos quam subjectum definitum, sed propositio major vel minor est magis evidens conclusionem (*ibid.*).

An important addition to Scotus' doctrine on self-evidence is found toward the end of the same question of the *Reportatio*, where the propositions of the first mode of predication are contrasted with those of the second mode.<sup>38</sup> Scotus points out that the propositions of the first mode, in spite of their greater degree of necessity, are not by that fact self-evident or better known than those of the second mode. They become self-evident only through definition of the terms, while many propositions of the second mode, though less necessary and composed of confusedly known terms, are perfectly evident to anyone who apprehends the terms. This is due to the fact that although the concept as presented in the definition is better known in itself (*in se*) than the undefined concept (*nomen*), yet the latter is better known to us (*nobis*). Thus the relation of the terms "whole" and "part" is immediately evident, although they may be apprehended in a confused manner only and accidentally (*secundum quid et confuse*), whereas many propositions with composite concepts are less well known to us, although the concepts

38. In predication *per se secundo modo* "the notion of the subject is found in the definition of the predicate, whereas in predication *per se primo modo* the predicate is either the whole or a part of the definition of the subject." Wolter, *op. cit.*, p. 87.



are apprehended distinctly and in their essential nature (*simpliciter et distincte*):

Omnes propositiones de primo modo dicendi per se sunt magis necessariae quam de secundo, non tamen sunt magis notae, sive quod sint per se notae, quia nulla nisi resolvendo terminos in suas definitiones quae est magis in se notus conceptus quam conceptus nominis; sed nobis magis notus confusus, I. *Physicorum*.<sup>39</sup> Unde talis conceptus evidenter ostendit unionem sui et habitudinem ad entitatem sui, quando scilicet termini concipiuntur secundum quid et confuse, ut in toto et in parte, unde statim notum est quod omne totum majus est sua parte. Sed non est de terminis compositis simpliciter et distincte, licet sint magis necessariae, non tamen magis nobis notae (*loc. cit.*, f. 22r).

Hence it is clear that (at least as far as self-evident propositions are concerned) distinctness is by no means synonymous with evidence,<sup>40</sup> and that a proposition can well be evident without its terms being known through a distinct analysis into all the components.

### 3. Self-Evident Propositions with Confused Terms as Principles of Particular Sciences

We have said before<sup>41</sup> that many of the principles used in particular sciences are not taken from a higher science, but won simply through experience. These are the principles which are self-evident through confused concepts, in opposition to the principles of metaphysics, which are always distinctly conceived, and in opposition likewise to those principles of the higher sciences whose concepts are already known distinctly:

Principia dupliciter possunt esse nota: uno modo confusa notitia, ut si termini apprehendantur per sensum et experientiam; et hoc sufficit ad scientiam terminorum in scientia qualibet speciali, ut quod linea sit longitudo, ignorando utrum quidditas ejus sit substantia, quantitas vel qualitas, etc. Alio modo possunt cognosci notitia distincta, sciendo ad quod genus pertineat quidditas eorum... (*Reportatio Exam.* prol. q. 2, f. 6r; cf. *Rep. par. ibid.*, n. 5; XXII, 36a)<sup>42</sup>

39. Aristotle, *Physics* I, chap. 1; 184a 16-22.

40. Raymond comes to the same conclusion in his interpretation of Scotus' texts: "La connaissance des termes, requise, n'est pas nécessairement la connaissance distincte qui est exprimée dans la définition. La connaissance confuse, qui, sans atteindre les raisons essentielles et les natures spécifiques, manifeste cependant la nécessité d'un lien objectif entre les termes, peut suffire. Dès lors qu'une proposition a cette aptitude de produire l'évidence par ses propres termes, elle mérite le nom de *per se nota*." (*loc. cit.*, p. 537).

41. *Supra*, p. 149.

42. Cf. also *Oxon.* III, d. 3, q. 3, nn. 6-7; IX, 103a-b; q. 4, n. 22; 190b-191a.

Scotus repeatedly insists on the evidence of these principles known from experience. Far from assigning them an inferior degree of evidence, he places them on the same level with the principles derived through demonstration from subalternating sciences:

Scientia subalternata...sua principia ut sibi evidentia...cognoscit... quia sunt nota per experientiam aut quia reducuntur in principia superioris scientiae (*Report. Exam. prol. q. 3, f. 9v*).

Despite the fact that their terms are only confusedly known these propositions are so evident that they dispense with every proof or confirmation on the part of the subalternating sciences; they are evident of themselves:

Etsi Metaphysicus cognoscens distincte quidditatem lineae vel totius, perfectius cognosceret aliquod principium immediatum de linea vel de toto, quam Geometer tantum confuse cognoscens lineam vel totum, tamen Geometrae est illa propositio immediata per se nota, nec probatur per istam Metaphysici, si<sup>43</sup> ex conceptu confuso terminorum sit<sup>44</sup> complexio vel connectio evidenter vera (*Oxon. prol. q. 6, f. 6r, b; Viv. q. 3, n. 29, VIII, 189b-190a*).

This applies not only to one or the other particular science but to all of them. On several occasions, when contrasting metaphysics and special sciences, Scotus says, without specification or restriction of any kind, that the principles of the latter are self-evident through the confused apprehension of their terms:

Sicut patuit ex quaestione illa de propositione per se nota, principia aliarum scientiarum sunt per se nota ex conceptu terminorum confuso (*Oxon. I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 27v, a; n. 25, IX, 50a*).<sup>45</sup>

Thus, on the one hand, there are self-evident propositions which are known as such only in that science in which the terms are conceived distinctly. These are metaphysical definitions. On the other hand, there are many propositions with confusedly known terms which are self-evident, not because their terms are defined, or capable of being defined by a superior science, or metaphysics, but merely and simply by their own confused terms. It is not without good reasons that Scotus insists so strongly on the distinction between principles of particular sciences and metaphysics. If the terms of every principle in particular sciences had to be defined to become self-evident, then no scientific knowledge would be possible unless it were preceded by a perfect knowledge of meta-

43. *Sed Viv.*

44. *Fit Viv.*

45. Cf. *Metaph.* VI, q. 1, n. 18; VII, 316a-b.



physics. However, just the opposite takes place in the actual order of cognition. For we acquire a distinct or metaphysical knowledge of things only subsequently to the less perfect knowledge of the particular sciences which proceed on the basis of principles composed of confused terms.<sup>46</sup> This is also the reason why Avicenna<sup>47</sup> places metaphysics last in the order of method, and first in the order of distinct knowledge:

Metaphysica secundum Avicennam...est prima secundum ordinem sciendi distincte, quia ipsa habet certificare principia aliarum scientiarum; igitur ejus cognoscibilia sunt prima distincte cognoscibilia. Nec in hoc contradicit sibi Avicenna quod ponit eam ultimam in ordine doctrinae et primam in sciendo distincte, quia sicut patuit ex quaestione illa de propositione per se nota, principia aliarum scientiarum sunt per se nota ex conceptu terminorum confuso; sed ex Metaphysica scita postea est possibilitas inquirendi quidditatem terminorum distincte, et hoc modo termini scientiarum specialium non concipiuntur, nec principia earum intelliguntur ante Metaphysicam. Sic etiam multa possunt patere metaphysico geometrae, quae non erant prius nota geometrae ex conceptu confuso (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 27v, a; n. 25, IX, 50a).

It may be objected that, since these principles of particular sciences are said to be known as self-evident through experience, they fail to fulfill the requirement laid down in the definition of a self-evident proposition, namely, that they must be evident in virtue of their terms alone. To this we answer that Scotus, as the texts show, derives the evidence of these principles from the relation between the terms as such, and not from their actual relation in reality. For since self-evidence, according to definition, is essentially a relation between concepts, it cannot be produced by something merely extrinsic or experimental. What is taken from sense experience is not the self-evidence of the proposition, but the knowledge of the terms. Once the terms have been apprehended in their proper meaning, the intellect no longer regards the experimental data; it merely considers the relation between the terms as they stand in the proposition. This point, however, will be considered more extensively in our treatment on the truth-value of first principles. The rules we shall establish there for first principles or axioms are also applicable in their essential implications to the self-evident propositions in general.

46. Cf. Basil Heiser, O.F.M. Conv., "The *Primum Cognitum* According to Scotus" in *Franciscan Studies*, II, (1942), pp. 200f.

47. *De Philosophia Prima*, tract. III, cap. III.

## D. INADEQUATE DISTINCTIONS REJECTED

As a consequence of his definition of the self-evident proposition, Scotus discards certain subdivisions, because they are incompatible with his interpretation of the function of the terms. In the mind of Scotus self-evident propositions are essentially objective structures<sup>48</sup> and therefore independent of actual apprehension on the part of any intellect.

For this reason Scotus first rejects the distinction between *propositio per se nota* and *propositio per se noscibilis*<sup>49</sup> on the grounds that they are simply identical. A proposition is self-evident, not because it is known as such by some intellect (in this case there would be no self-evident proposition unless an intellect were actually conceiving it), but rather because its terms contain evident truth, and because in virtue of these terms it can be conceived as true and evident by every intellect that apprehends the terms. A proposition loses nothing of its self-evidence because it is not actually conceived by some intellect:

Patet quod distinguere non est inter propositionem per se notam et per se noscibilem, quia idem sunt. Nam propositio non dicitur per se nota quia ab aliquo intellectu per se cognoscitur; tunc enim si nullus intellectus actu cognosceret, nulla propositio esset per se nota; sed dicitur propositio per se nota, quia quantum est de natura terminorum nata est habere evidentem veritatem contentam in terminis, etiam in quocumque intellectu concipiente terminos; si tamen aliquis intellectus non concipiat terminos, et ita non concipiat propositionem, non minus est per se nota quantum est de se, et sic loquimur de per se nota (*Oxon. I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, b; n. 3, VIII, 399a-b*).<sup>50</sup>

Likewise, the distinction between *propositio per se nota in se* and *propositio per se nota in nobis*<sup>51</sup> is meaningless. Every self-evident proposition, although it may not be actually known, is and remains simply self-evident. Since the evidence resides in the terms, the proposition is always evident as far as the terms are concerned. If I apprehend the terms, I also know the self-evident

48. Cf. Schmucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 f.

49. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, a. 1, c.

50. *Report. I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 21v*: "Distinctio autem non est ad propositum quia dicitur quod propositio potest esse nota per se vel per se noscibilis; sufficit enim quod sit per se noscibilis in terminis, quantum est de se, licet accidentaliter non cognoscatur."

51. *Summa Theologica*, *loc. cit.*



proposition; if I do not apprehend them, I do not grasp the self-evident proposition. This subjective knowledge or ignorance of the self-evident proposition obviously is no reason for a distinction between a *propositio in se* and *in nobis*, since the whole difference between the two subjective states lies in the apprehension or non-apprehension of the *terms*, neither of which affects the proposition itself. A proposition does not cease to be self-evident because it is ignored, nor does it become self-evident because it is known:

Ex his patet quod nulla est distinctio de per se nota in se et in nobis, quia quaecumque est in se et per se nota cuicumque intellectui est per se nota, licet non actu cognita; tamen quantum est ex terminis est evidenter nota si termini concipiantur (*ibid.*).<sup>52</sup>

Again, Scotus sees no reason to distinguish between propositions self-evident to the learned and propositions self-evident to the unlearned. Neither of these distinctions (and the same holds true of all the preceding and following distinctions) has any bearing on the intrinsic constitution of the propositions themselves. All of these distinctions are based on the merely extrinsic and accidental factor<sup>53</sup> of the actual apprehension or non-apprehension of the terms, which conditions subjective apprehension:<sup>54</sup>

Propter idem non valet distinctio quod aliquid est per se notum sapientibus et insipientibus,<sup>55</sup> quia hoc tantum pertinet ad conceptionem terminorum, quae supponitur ad intellectum propositionis per se notae (*ibid.*).

Scotus also extends his objections to the subdivision based on the *communes animi conceptiones* of Boëthius<sup>56</sup> and to the dis-

52. Report., loc. cit.: "Similiter de nota quoad nos et in se, quia sufficit quod propositio sit de se nota, si sit intellectus cognoscens, evidentia enim patet ex habitudine terminorum."

53. Cf. *supra*, note 59: "...licet accidentaliter non cognoscatur."

54. Cf. Raymond, loc. cit., p. 539: "Duns Scot enseigne que la proposition *per se nota* est exposée en termes capables de produire l'évidence en toute intelligence qui les conçoit suffisamment. Mais encore faut-il concevoir ces termes suffisamment. Or les esprits peu cultivés en auront, le plus souvent, une connaissance trop incomplète pour percevoir l'évidence de leur rapport. Pour eux, comme pour les savants, cependant, la proposition *per se nota* est réellement telle. La différence des deux situations ne change rien à la nature de la proposition *per se nota*, toujours identique à elle même: elle a trait seulement à la conception des termes, condition prérequis pour l'intelligence actuelle."

55. St. Thomas, loc. cit.

56. *Quomodo substantiae bonae sint liber*, PL 64, col. 1311a, B: "Communis animi conceptio est enunciatio quam quisque probat auditam."

inction between two different orders of self-evident propositions. Some of the Boëthian common conceptions which St. Thomas Aquinas adduces as a justification for his own distinctions are said to be commonly or universally known, whereas others are self-evident only to the wise. These common conceptions of Boëthius, says Scotus, either are not identical with the self-evident propositions in our sense, or else Boëthius, in establishing this subdivision, does not refer to them as actually apprehended, but merely as conceptions which may be apprehended by means of the terms. In this sense Scotus would grant a certain distinction, for terms admit of a more or less perfect degree of distinctness according as they are conceived by an unlearned or by a learned person. The metaphysician often has distinct concepts by which he apprehends certain propositions as self-evident which are not grasped as such by the man in the street who has only confused concepts:

...licet sic distinguat Boethius *De Hebdomadibus* communem conceptionem; sed vel non est idem propositio per se nota et communis conceptio, vel ipse intelligit de concepta, non de conceptibili sub ratione terminorum distincte (*ibid.*).

Finally, the distinction between a superior and an inferior order of self-evident propositions, too, is out of place.<sup>57</sup> Every genuinely self-evident proposition is such in virtue of its own terms, and therefore in an unqualified sense. Hence a proposition is either self-evident or it is not self-evident. It cannot be more or less self-evident.<sup>58</sup>

Nec illa distinctio valet, quod aliquae sunt per se notae primi ordinis, aliquae secundi; quia quaecumque propositiones sunt per se notae conceptis terminis propriis, sicut sunt termini, habent evidentem veritatem in ordine suo (*ibid.*).

In view of the preceding texts it is quite surprising that Claverie<sup>59</sup>

57. Lychetus tells us in his commentary (Vivès ed, of Scotus, VIII, 401a) that this distinction proceeds from William of Ware.

58. Cf. H. Straubinger, "Evidenz und Kausalitätsgesetz" in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, XLIII (1930), p. 17: "Mit einer halben oder Viertel-evidenz, wenn es eine solche überhaupt gibt, ist nichts gewonnen. Es bleibt wohl bei dem Dilemma: Entweder sind die ersten Grundlagen der Erkenntnis (unmittelbar) evident, oder sie sind nicht evident."

59. A.-Fr. Claverie, O.P., "L'existence de Dieu d'après Duns Scot" in *Revue Thomiste*, XVII (1909), p. 89. Raymond (*loc. cit.*, pp. 536 ff) sees an attenuating circumstance for Claverie's misconceptions in the fact that his remarks were made



could have seen in the rejection of the aforementioned subdivisions an indication that Scotus interprets the self-evident proposition in a subjective sense, as if to be self-evident a proposition would have to be actually evident to the intellect. Far from making it subjective, Scotus safeguards the objectivity of self-evidence by placing it in the terms alone. To Scotus, a proposition is self-evident not because it is actually apprehended by some particular intellect, but because it can be apprehended by any intellect which grasps the proper meaning of the terms.

#### E. FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

##### 1. *No Proposition is Apprehended as Self-Evident*

##### *Unless its Terms are Apprehended in their Proper Meaning*

The remainder of Scotus' discussion centers about the question whether or not it is self-evident that God exists. This problem gives the Franciscan Doctor the opportunity to discuss from new angles the important question of the function of the terms in self-evident propositions.

Scotus maintains that if the proposition, "Deus est," is taken in the sense of the *esse Dei in se*,<sup>60</sup> then it is self-evident. When the terms, "this divine Essence," and "exists," are combined, they constitute a proposition in which all the requirements for self-evidence are satisfied. For it is a proposition of the first mode of predication the terms of which are distinctly conceived. It is not, however, asserted that man in his present state is able to know this proposition evidently, for he does not grasp the terms in their proper meaning, as they are perceived by God and the Blessed:

Propositio illa est per se nota quae conjungit extrema ista esse et essentiam divinam ut haec est, sive Deum et esse sibi proprium quomodo Deus videt illam essentiam et esse sub propriissima ratione qua est in Deo hoc esse. Quomodo nec esse a nobis nunc intelligitur, nec essentia, sed ab ipso Deo et a Beatis, quia propositio illa ex suis terminis habet evidentem veritatem intellectui, quia illa propositio non est per se se-

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at the occasion of an article by Belmond ("L'existence de Dieu" in *Revue de Phil.*, Sept.-Oct. 1908) whose interpretations of Scotus are not "tout à fait *ad litteram*, et les notes critiques du R.P. Claverie en reproduisent les particularités."

60. *Report.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 21v: "(Propositio) 'Deus est'...intelligendo de Deo in se et de esse Dei in se...est per se nota."

cundo modo, quasi praedicatum sit extra rationem subjecti, sed per se primo modo immediata ex terminis est evidens (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, b; n. 4, VIII, 402b-403a).

Scotus admits that man is able to formulate several concepts of God which do not apply to God and creature, as, for instance, the concepts of Necessary and Infinite Being, of Highest Good, etc. But if it is asked whether existence is self-evidently implied in such concepts, Scotus' answer is negative. His reasons are, first, that propositions formulated of such concepts can be demonstrated; secondly, that they can either be demonstrated or believed; thirdly, that the parts of the mentioned concepts do not constitute a self-evident unity. First, then, the said propositions can, at least absolutely speaking, be demonstrated. According to the rules of demonstrative sciences everything contained in and conceivable of the Divine Essence can be demonstrated of it as through a middle term, at least by those who know Divine Essence *ut haec*. Scotus does not say that such a demonstration is actually made either by the human intellect or by the Blessed. The former is unable to make it, and the latter most probably have no need of it. Yet such a demonstration is possible. This is sufficient to establish the non-evidence of the propositions in question, for no proposition that admits of a demonstration is self-evident:

Si quaeratur an esse insit alicui conceptui quem nos concipimus de Deo, ita quod talis propositio sit per se nota...puta potest in intellectu nostro esse aliquis conceptus dictus de Deo, tamen non communis sibi et creaturae, puta necessario esse, vel ens infinitum, vel summum bonum... Dico quod nulla talis est per se nota propter tria. Primo quia quaelibet talis est conclusio demonstrabilis<sup>61</sup> et propter quid. Probatio, quidquid primo et immediate convenit alicui, de quolibet quod est in eo potest demonstrari propter quid per illud cui primo convenit tamquam per medium...Nulla igitur complexio...de Deo est primo vera sed per aliud vera et per consequens non est primo et per se nota (*Oxon.* I, d. 2. q. 2, f. 15r, a; n. 5, VIII, 405a-b).

Secondly, a self-evident proposition should be evident to every intellect which conceives the terms. Our propositions about God, such as "An infinite Being exists," "A highest Good exists," are not self-evident to us by virtue of the terms. We may well be in possession of the terms and yet it will not be until some time later

61. *Demonstrata Ass. MS.* We have chosen here the Vivès version because it seems to fit better into the context.



that either we accept these propositions on faith, or before we arrive at a certain knowledge of them through a demonstrative process of reasoning.<sup>62</sup> No proposition, however, which needs belief or demonstration in order to assume the character of true certitude, is self-evident:

Secundo sic: propositio per se nota cuilibet intellectui ex terminis cognitis est per se nota, sed haec propositio, ens infinitum est, non est evidens intellectui nostro ex terminis. Probo: terminos enim nos concipimus antequam eam credamus vel per demonstrationem sciamus, et in illo priori non est nobis evidens; non enim certitudinaliter eam tenemus ex terminis nisi per fidem vel demonstrationem (*ibid.* VIII, 405b).

Thirdly, nothing is known self-evidently of a concept which is not irreducibly simple unless it is first self-evident that the component parts of that concept constitute a unity. None of our proper concepts of God are irreducibly simple, at least none of those we apprehend distinctly as proper to God. Consequently, nothing will be self-evident of such concepts unless their component parts are self-evidently associated. This association, however, is not self-evident, because it fails to produce certitude except through demonstration:

Tertio, quia nihil est per se notum de conceptu non simpliciter simplici, nisi sit per se notum partes illius conceptus uniri. Nullus autem conceptus quem habemus de Deo, proprius sibi et non conveniens creaturae, est simpliciter simplex, vel saltem nullus quem nos distincte percipimus esse proprium Deo est simpliciter simplex; ergo nihil est per se notum de tali conceptu, nisi sit per se notum partes illius conceptus uniri; sed hoc non est per se notum, quia unio illarum partium demonstratur per duas rationes<sup>63</sup> (*ibid.*; VIII, 405b-406a).

Proof of the major premise of this syllogism: It can be shown from a passage of Aristotle that nothing is self-evidently predicated of a non-irreducibly simple concept unless the parts of the latter are known to constitute a true unity. According to the Philosopher,<sup>64</sup> a concept which is false in itself is false of everything else. No concept can be truly predicated of anything unless it is true in itself, nor can it serve as a subject of which something is predicated.

62. It seems that Scotus is here referring to the demonstration *a posteriori* which is possible to us, contrary to the hypothetical *a priori* demonstration of the preceding text.

63. Ergo nihil.../ *om. Ass. MS*:

64. *Metaphysics* IV, c. 29; 1024b, 27-32.

Consequently, before a proposition is formulated in which a non-irreducibly simple term occurs, we must first ascertain whether the component parts of the concept expressed in such a term constitute a true unity. No true or self-evident proposition can result if this condition is absent. Thus the proposition, "Homo irrationalis est animal," cannot be self-evident, because the subject includes contradictory elements:

Major manifesta est per Philosophum 5. *Metaph. cap. de Falso*, quia ratio in se falsa est de omni falsa; ergo nulla ratio est de aliquo vera nisi sit in se vera; ergo ad hoc quod cognoscatur aliquod esse verum de aliqua ratione, vel ipsam esse veram de aliquo, oportet cognoscere ipsam in se esse veram. Non est autem ratio in se vera nisi partes illius rationis sint unitae... Exemplum, illa (propositio): Homo irrationalis est animal, non est per se nota, loquendo de praedicatione quidditativa, quia subjectum in se includit falsum, quia propositionem in se includentem contradictoria (*ibid.* VIII, 406a).

Proof of the minor premise of the syllogism: None of the irreducibly simple concepts which we predicate of God are proper to Him unless we determine them in such a way as to render them capable of being applied to God alone. In other words, we must transform the irreducibly simple concepts into composed concepts. The concepts of *true* and *good*, for instance, (which, by reason of their transcendentality and coextension<sup>65</sup> with the concept of being belong to the order of irreducibly simple notions) cannot be predicated of God in the proper sense unless a qualification is added to make them composite concepts.

Probatio minoris. Quemcumque conceptum concipimus sive boni sive veri, si non contrahatur per aliquid ut non sit conceptus simpliciter simplex, ut dicendo: summum bonum, vel infinitum bonum, vel increatum, vel immensum, et sic de aliis<sup>66</sup> non est proprius conceptus Deo (*ibid.*).

## 2. Self-Evidence not in Proportion to Necessity of Terms

Among the arguments in favor of the self-evidence of the existence of an Infinite Being, one is found which tries to base the self-evidence of the propositions concerning the Highest Being on the greater necessity of the terms. The reasoning proceeds as follows. We have propositions which are self-evident although they are so merely accidentally (*secundum quid*), for their self-evidence

65. Wolter, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

66. Ut dicendo.../ *add. Viv.*



proceeds from terms which exist only in the intellect, and hence have only an accidental entity. A fortiori, the evidence of a proposition which is formulated of absolutely (*simpliciter*) necessary terms must even be superior, as its terms are of greater necessity. Scotus' opponents base their inference on the fact that the existence or non-existence of the terms *in re* is absolutely irrelevant for the necessity and knowability of the first principles. They are knowable and necessary through the mutual relation or connection of the terms as they are conceived in the intellect:

Propositiones habentes veritatem secundum quid ex terminis habentibus entitatem secundum quid, scilicet ex hoc quod sunt in intellectu, sunt per se notae, sicut prima principia...; ergo multo magis erit per se nota quae habet necessitatem ex terminis simpliciter necessariis vel notis, qualis est illa: Deus est. Assumptum patet, quia necessitas primorum principiorum et noscibilitas eorum non est propter existentiam terminorum in re, sed tantum propter connexionem extremorum, ut est in intellectu concipiente (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 14v, a; n. 1, 395 VIII, 395b).

Scotus' answer to this argument makes it clear that the evidence of a proposition is neither dependent on, nor in proportion to, the necessity of its terms. The definition of a self-evident proposition disregards every qualification of the terms; it is not the intrinsic necessity of the terms which is responsible for self-evidence, but only the relationship existing between the terms. Self-evidence consists in the evidence of the conformity between the composition (i.e., the proposition as a whole) and its terms. No proposition which lacks this conformity between composition and terms is to be considered self-evident, however necessary its terms may be. Thus the proposition "Ens infinitum est" is not known as evident by our intellect through the terms, despite the necessity of the Being to which they refer.

Conversely, there are propositions whose terms are less necessary and still are truly self-evident, due to the evident relation between the terms. The proposition, "The whole is greater than any of its parts," is evident to every mind which perceives the terms and their meaning, even though the entities for which they stand may be not necessary at all. The proposition would remain self-evident even if its terms were conceived only in the intellect and independently of every reality. The necessity of the terms or of

their correspondents in reality, therefore, has no bearing on the evidence of the proposition:

Ad ultimum dico quod non dicuntur propositiones per se notae, quia extrema habent maiorem necessitatem in se, sive maiorem in re extra intellectum, sed quia extrema ut sunt extrema talis propositionis evidenter ostendunt complexionem esse conformem rationibus terminorum et habitudini eorum, et hoc quaecumque esse termini habeant, sive in re sive in intellectu.

Evidentia enim hujus conformitatis est evidentia veritatis in propositione, quod est propositionem esse per se notam. Nunc autem ista: Ens infinitum est in intellectu nostro, non nata est habere evidentiam ex terminis, sed bene ista:<sup>67</sup> Omne totum est majus sua parte...in quocumque intellectu concipiente terminos nata est habere talem evidentiam ex terminis...quaecumque esse termini habeant, et ideo licet sit major necessitas terminorum, non sequitur quod sit minor evidentia propositionum (*loc. cit.*, 15r, b; n. 9, VIII, 409a).

In order that the reader may obtain an overall view of Scotus' concept of a self-evident proposition and of the function of the terms, we shall close the present chapter with a short summary of its main conclusions.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. By saying that a proposition is known *per se* we do not exclude every causality (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 2; VIII, 396a).
2. The expression *per se* does not indicate that the proposition is innate in the intellect (*Metaph.* II, q. 1, n. 2; VII, 97a).
3. *Per se* indicates that the cause of the truth and certitude of a self-evident proposition is nothing else but its own proper terms (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 2; VIII, 396a).
4. A proposition is called *per se* evident, in opposition to the conclusion of a syllogism, which is evident *per aliud* (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 2; VIII, 396a-b).
5. A self-evident proposition is composed of either distinct or confused terms (*loc. cit.*, 396b).
6. Confused knowledge precedes distinct knowledge (*ibid.*).
7. Propositions with distinct terms are evident through distinct concepts (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 3; 398b).
8. Propositions with confused terms are self-evident in virtue of confused concepts (*ibid.*).

67. Ens infinitum.../ *om. Assisi MS.*



9. No proposition is self-evident which is formulated with confused terms which must be defined. (*ibid.*).

10. Propositions composed of irreducibly simple terms are immediately evident (*loc. cit.*, n. 5; 406a).

11. Propositions composed of non-irreducibly simple concepts are not self-evident unless it is self-evident that the component parts of the concepts constitute a unity (*ibid.*).

12. The self-evidence of a proposition is neither dependent on, nor in proportion to, the necessity of its terms (*loc. cit.*, n. 9; 409a).

13. Self-evident propositions are either of the first or of the second mode of predication (*Report.* I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 21v).

14. No proposition of the first mode is self-evident unless a metaphysical or essential definition of the terms is first given. In contrast, many propositions of the second mode are truly self-evident in virtue of a confused knowledge of the terms (*loc. cit.*, f. 22r).

15. Principles of subalternate sciences are evident either by derivation from the subalternating science, or through experience (*Report.* prol. q. 3, f. 9v).

16. Many principles of particular sciences are known self-evidently through confused terms taken from experience (*Oxon.* prol. q. 3, n. 29; VIII, 189b; *Rep. Paris.* prol. q. 2, n. 5; XXII, 36a).

17. No proposition is known as self-evident unless the terms are apprehended in their proper meaning. Hence a proposition that is self-evident to the metaphysician may not be so to the geometrician, not because the proposition itself is less self-evident, but because the geometrician is unable to conceive the proper meaning of the terms (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, n. 25; IX, 50a). Likewise, although the proposition "Deus est" is self-evident, we cannot conceive it as such, due to our imperfect apprehension of the terms (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 4; VIII, 402b-403a).

18. There is no distinction between a *propositio per se nota* and *per se noscibilis*, or between a *propositio per se nota in se* and *in nobis*, or between a *propositio per se nota sapientibus* and *insipientibus*. The apprehension or non-apprehension of the terms (on which these distinctions are based) does not affect the proposition itself, and is, therefore, no reason for the aforementioned subdivisions (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 3; VIII, 399a).

## CHAPTER II

### EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SELF-EVIDENT PROPOSITIONS

In his detailed analysis of the self-evident proposition, Scotus does not overlook its significance in the scheme of human knowledge. The conclusion of the question just analyzed points to the *propositio per se nota* as constituting a most sure source of true knowledge. Scotus identifies the self-evidence of propositions with the evidence of truth. It is the self-evidence of truth which causes a proposition to become self-evident:

Evidentia enim hujus conformitatis (compositionis ad extrema) est evidentia veritatis in propositione, quod est propositionem esse per se notam (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, f. 15r, b; n. 9, VIII, 409a).

This is a fitting transition to the important question<sup>1</sup> which contains Scotus' detailed and *ex professo* treatment of the truth-value of the self-evident proposition. It is true that in the present question Scotus speaks mainly of the *prima principia*. But as has been said before,<sup>2</sup> Scotus' conception of a self-evident proposition in general, does not differ from his conception of the first principles. Hence the following considerations are applicable (at least in their essential implications) to all self-evident propositions.

#### A. OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE AND SUBJECTIVE CERTITUDE IN FIRST PRINCIPLES

Scotus' intention here is to prove, against the sceptics, that the human intellect is capable of acquiring certain and infallible cognitions. One of these is the cognition of first principles. It is well to recall some of the conditions which Scotus has laid down regarding certitude. Only that knowledge is certain "which excludes every deception and doubt."<sup>3</sup> There is no certitude in the apprehension of truth unless the intellect is aware that what it appre-

1. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, nn. 7-8; IX, 173a-174b.

2. *Supra*, p. 124.

3. *Quodl.* q. 17, n. 11; XXVI, 220a; *Oxon.* prol. q. 3, n. 26; VIII, 183b.



hends is true.<sup>4</sup> The intellect must perceive "that from which the act derives its certitude:"

Et hoc (scil. certitudo excludens deceptionem et dubitationem) non est nisi intellectus percipiat id a quo actus habet quod sit certus (*Quodl.* q. 17, n. 11; XXVI, 220a).

In other words, our knowledge, in order to be truly certain, must be based on objective evidence. As stated in the first part of this dissertation,<sup>5</sup> Scotus identifies objective evidence with the entity of the object itself. All objects are evident in themselves, i.e., they can be known as to their entity by every adequate intellect. This holds true, not only of real objects, but also of logical structures; for these too are objectively true, regardless of any apprehending intellect.

#### 1. *Basis of Certitude: Mutual Inclusion of the Extremes*

Scotus describes the objective character of the evidence of first principles in terms of identity, and in terms of a relation of mutual and necessary inclusion existing between the extremes:

Quantum ad certitudinem de principiis dico sic: termini principiorum per se notorum talem habent identitatem ut alter evidenter necessario alterum includat (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, a; n. 7, IX, 173b).

The terms of self-evident principles include one another in a necessary and evident manner because they are identical, in the sense that the predicate is essentially contained in the subject. Thus in the principle, "Every whole is greater than any of its parts," the term "part" is contained in the term "whole" so that the latter cannot even be conceived without the former. The principle, therefore, is formulated on the basis of an objective relation between the terms, or, in other words, on the basis of objective evidence. The first principles are no arbitrary constructions of the mind. As logical structures they possess their own intrinsic truth-value, independently of the apprehending intellect. This is why, according to Scotus, "a proposition is not said to be self-evident because it is known as such by some particular intellect. For then,

4. *Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 12; VII, 58a: "Certitudo nunquam est in apprehendendo verum, nisi talis sciat...illud esse verum quod apprehendit." Vide *supra*, pp. 104 ff.

5. *Supra*, pp. 71 ff.

if no intellect were actually perceiving it, there would be no self-evident proposition. A proposition is called self-evident because, through the nature of the terms, it is able to be true (i.e., to be known as true) by reason of the evident truth contained in the terms, and this in any intellect conceiving the terms. If, however, some intellect does not conceive the terms nor consequently the proposition, the latter is herewith not less self-evident in itself."<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Subjective Certitude of First Principles

It has been shown that the mutual relation between the terms of the principles is objectively necessary and evident. As a consequence, as soon as the terms are conceived and compared with each other by the intellect, the same relation becomes subjectively known. This relation is immediately expressed by the intellect in the form of a proposition or "composition." With the terms and their objective relation the intellect is also given the necessary cause of the conformity of the composition with the terms themselves. Since a necessary cause never fails to produce its effect,<sup>7</sup> it follows that the said conformity is necessarily known to the mind. It is not in the power of the intellect to refuse to see the relation between the terms once it has apprehended them in their proper meaning. Scotus compares the conformity between composition and terms to the likeness existing between two white objects. As it is impossible that there is no likeness between the latter so it is impossible not to apprehend the conformity between the former:

Et ideo intellectus componens illos terminos, ex quo apprehendit eos, habet apud se necessariam causam conformitatis illius actus componendi ad ipsos terminos quorum est compositio, et etiam causam evidentem talis conformitatis; et ideo necessario patet sibi illa conformitas cujus causam necessariam et<sup>8</sup> evidentem apprehendit in terminis; igitur non potest in intellectu apprehensio esse terminorum et compositio eorum, quin stet conformitas illius compositionis ad terminos sicut stare non potest album et album quin stet similitudo (*ibid.*).

The conformity between terms and composition constitutes the truth of the composition. Since there is a necessary mutual relation

6. For Scotus' original text see *supra*, p. 165.

7. *Supra*, p. 99.

8. *Necessariam et om. Ass. MS.*



between the terms, it follows that the composition by which the same relation is expressed is also necessarily true. It likewise follows that it is impossible for the intellect to conceive the terms and their composition without perceiving simultaneously the conformity of the composition with the terms, or, in other words, without apprehending the truth of the composition. For this truth is evidently contained in the terms and their composition:

Haec autem conformitas compositionis ad terminos est veritas compositionis; ergo non potest stare compositio talium terminorum quin sit vera; et ita non potest stare perceptio illius compositionis et perceptio terminorum, quin stet perceptio conformitatis compositionis ad terminos, et ita perceptio veritatis, quia prima percepta evidenter includunt perceptionem istius veritatis (*ibid.*).

As is implicit in the cited text, the intellect also assents necessarily to the composition thus obtained. Once the composition is formulated, the intellect is as incapable of refusing its assent to such a proposition as it is incapable of denying the principle of contradiction. Aristotle writes<sup>9</sup> that the mind is unable to grasp the opposite of the principle of contradiction. For this would suppose the coexistence in the mind of two formally repugnant propositions, one affirming and the other denying the same predicate of the same subject. This is an intellectual impossibility. A similar repugnance (although not formally the same) obtains between the affirmation and the negation of any first principle. Thus the denial of the proposition, "The whole is greater than its part," is incompatible with the apprehension of the terms "whole" and "part" and of the relation between them. For in the terms and their composition the conformity of the composition with the terms is contained as in a necessary cause. If the intellect were to consider a proposition thus formulated as false, then two virtually repugnant cognitions would be present in the mind.<sup>10</sup> In fact, to admit that a self-evident proposition and its opposite can exist simultaneously in the mind

9. *Metaphysics* III, c. 4; 1005b 35 - 1006a 4.

10. Cf. R. Messner, O.F.M., *Schauendes und begriffliches Erkennen nach Duns Scotus* (Freiburg, 1942), p. 220: "Es waere widersinnig, einerseits den Inhalt des Praedikatsbegriffes als Teil des Subjektsinhaltes zu denken und andererseits die Zusammengehorigkeit des vom Praedikat Gemeinten zu dem vom Subjekt Gemeinten zu leugnen."

is equivalent to admitting that two contradictory cognitions 'can be produced, and necessarily produced, by one and the same cause (i.e., the terms and their composition). This, obviously, is impossible. In the same manner as it is impossible for white and black to exist together by reason of their formal contrariety, so it is unthinkable that whiteness be found in association with that which is not only the necessary but also the exclusive cause of blackness. Again, darkness and light are exclusive of each other. Let it be supposed that the sun is the only source of light, and furthermore that it produces light necessarily. Under this presupposition it must be admitted that, as it is impossible for darkness and light to exist together, so it is also impossible for darkness to be found together with that necessary and exclusive cause of light which is the sun. Similar to the relation between light and sun is the relation between the truth of principles and their causes, i.e., the terms and their composition. For the latter, as has already been pointed out, exercise the function of an exclusive and necessary causality with regard to the truth of principles. Hence, as the sun can only produce light and exclude darkness, so the terms and their composition can only engender certain and evident knowledge of truth, and exclude deception and falsity:

Confirmatur ratio ista per simile per Philosophum IV *Metaph.*, ubi vult quod oppositum primi principii non potest in intellectu alicujus venire, scilicet hujus: impossibile idem esse et non esse, quia tunc essent opiniones contrariae simul in mente... Ita arguam in proposito repugnantiam aliquam intellectionum in mente, licet non formalem; si enim stat in intellectu notitia totius et partis et compositio eorum, cum ista includant sicut causa necessaria conformitatem compositionis ad terminos, si stat in intellectu haec opinio quod ipsa compositio sit falsa, stabunt notitiae repugnantes, non formaliter, sed notitia una stabit cum alia, et tamen una erit causa necessaria oppositae notitiae ad illam, quod est impossibile; sicut enim impossibile est album et nigrum simul stare, quia sunt contraria formaliter, ita impossibile est simul stare album et illud quod est praecise causa nigri, ita necessario quod non potest esse sine eo, absque contradictione (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, a; n. 8, IX, 173b-174a).

The Scotistic doctrine on the first principles is faced with a peculiar problem inasmuch as their evidence is placed in the sole apprehension and comparison of the terms. It is well known that for Aristotle and his followers there is no intellectual cognition



without a preceding sense perception. Now, what will be the function of sense perception with regard to the truth-value and evidence of the principles?

## B. THE FUNCTION OF THE SENSES

### IN FIRST PRINCIPLES

Scotus, as we have seen, speaks not only of an evident knowledge, but even of a *necessarily* evident knowledge of self-evident propositions and first principles. And this, despite the fact that the terms of these propositions are taken from sensible contingent things. How, it may be asked, can terms obtained from contingent things produce a necessary relation in the mind, as the terms of principles do? It would seem that the inescapable evidence of first principles cannot be sufficiently accounted for through sense perception. For an effect cannot be more perfect than its cause. Only two ways can lead us out of this emasse. Either we admit that the intellect has an inborn knowledge of the principles, or we must deny to sense perception the function of true causality and lay a correspondingly stronger stress on the activity of the intellect.

#### 1. *First Principles are not Innate*

Scotus does not admit an inborn knowledge flowing from the very nature of the intellect. Against Plato<sup>11</sup> he defends the need of experience for all knowledge, including first principles. In fact, if we knew them by nature, they could not remain hidden to us. But actually we do not become aware of the principles before we have acquired them through study. Hence they cannot be inborn:

Contra opinionem Platonis arguit Aristoteles<sup>12</sup> II *Post.*, cap. ult., sic: Inconveniens est cognitiones certissimas demonstrantem latere: sed antequam addiscantur, non percipimus eas in nobis; ergo non insunt (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 9; VII, 56a).

As Aristotle<sup>13</sup> puts it, the soul is of itself like a blank page, on which as yet nothing is written. Scotus' application of the Aris-

11. For a detailed refutation of Plato's doctrine on reminiscence vide *Metaph.* I, q. 4; nn. 8-10; VII, 55b-57a.

12. *Posterior Analytics* II, c. 19; 99b 24-27.

13. *De anima* III, c. 4; 429b 32-430a 2.

totelian formula to the first principles is even more emphatic. He remarks that the fact that our intellect cannot err concerning first principles is no reason for saying that they are given with the intellect, or identical with it, as it were:

Intellectus noster non est sua prima principia intelligibilia, quia ante omnia intelligere est sicut tabula rasa, in qua nihil depictum est, et tamen intellectus noster circa prima principia non potest errare (*Oxon.* II, d. 23, q. un., n. 5; XIII, 160b).<sup>14</sup>

If it is said, at times, that first principles are innate, this must be taken in the sense that they are grasped by the intellect's own power or "light:"

Non enim sic sunt principia intellectui innata, quod sint sibi con-creata, sed pro tanto dicuntur innata, quia sunt sicut januae...quia statim ex sensu occurrunt notis terminis ex lumine ipsius intellectus (*Rep. Paris.* II, d. 23, q. un., n. 3; XXIII, 107b).

Although the intellect apprehends the principles by its own intrinsic power, this does not mean that it needs no help whatsoever from other faculties. It can never dispense with the help of the senses. For it is through the senses that the *simplicia* or *incomplexa*, i.e., the subject and predicate, are apprehended. Hence even in the formulation of first principles the usual process of knowledge takes place, at least in the first three of the four steps which Scotus distinguishes in the genesis of knowledge: First, the senses are stimulated by a simple object; secondly, the sense-datum is transmitted to the intellect whose first act is the intellection of the same simple datum; thirdly, the intellect composes one simple datum with another, i.e., it formulates a proposition by either affirming or denying the one of the other; fourthly, in the case of first principles, the intellect gives immediate assent to the truth of the proposition, and that in virtue of its own "natural light:"

Omnis nostra cognitio ortum habet ex sensu. Primo enim movetur sensus ab aliquo simplici, non complexo, et a sensu moto movetur intellectus, et intelligit simplicia, quod est primus actus intellectus; deinde post apprehensionem simplicium sequitur alius actus, qui est componere simplicia ad invicem; post illam autem compositionem habet intellectus ex lumine naturali quod assentiat veritati complexorum, si illud complexum sit principium primum (*Metaph.* II, q. 1, n. 2; VII, 96b).<sup>15</sup>

14. Cf. *Rep. Paris.* II, d. 23, q. un., n. 3; XXIII, 107b.

15. Cf. also *Metaph.* VI, q. 3, n. 7; VII, 339a.



First principles have this in common with every other process of knowledge, that they start from sense perception. However, they differ from them inasmuch as they are always true, and knowable as such, independently of true or false sense perception. This brings us to our second point.

2. *Sense Perception, Occasional Cause of  
Evidence in First Principles*

Scotus grants that the intellect cannot act unless it is stimulated by sense perception. However, he does not exaggerate the dependence of intellectual activity on sense perception to the point of making the trustworthiness of every mental judgment dependent on the trustworthiness of the senses. This is plain from his definition of a *propositio per se nota*. A self-evident proposition is not defined on the basis of sense apprehension but on the basis of the terms. It follows that the evidence of such a proposition can be apprehended by the intellect even though the senses should deceive us.<sup>16</sup> For the senses play here the role of a merely occasional cause, or of a *conditio sine qua non*. If the intellect apprehends the simple concepts "whole" and "greater than" by experience, it has all it needs to formulate the principle, "The whole is greater than any of its parts," and this, regardless of whether the terms are obtained through erring senses. The intellect also assents to this proposition by its own power and in virtue of the terms as they stand in the proposition, and not only because it has seen the relation between the terms *in re*, as is the case with contingent propositions:

Sed numquid in ista notitia principiorum et conclusionum non errabit intellectus, si sensus omnes decipiantur circa terminos? - Respondeo quantum ad istam notitiam quod intellectus non habet sensus pro causa, sed tantum pro occasione, quia intellectus non potest habere notitiam simplicium nisi acceptam a sensibus; illa tamen accepta, virtute sua potest simul componere simplicia; et si ex ratione talium simplicium sit complexio evidenter vera, intellectus virtute propria et terminorum

16. This seems to be one of the reasons why Scotus gives the axiom "Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu" the less exclusive formulation: "Omnis nostra cognitio ortum habet in sensu" (*Metaph.* II, q. 1, n. 2; VII, 96b). Cf. S. Belmond, O.F.M., "Le mécanisme de la connaissance d'après Jean Duns Scot" in *La France Franciscaine*, XIII (1930), p. 309.

assentiet illi complexioni, non virtute sensus a quo accipit terminos exterius. - Exemplum: Si ratio totius et ratio maioritatis accipiantur a sensu, et intellectus componat istam, omne totum est majus sua parte, intellectus virtute sui et istorum terminorum assentiet indubitanter isti complexioni, et non tantum quia vidit terminos conjunctos in re, sicut assentit isti, Sortes est albus, quia vidit terminos in re uniri (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, a; n. 8, IX, 174a-174b).

Scotus goes further. He maintains that the intellect is never deceived with regard to first principles, not even on the assumption that all our senses erred, or what would be even worse, that some senses were wrong and some right. Since the terms are the exclusive cause of truth in such propositions, the intellect can apprehend their truth as soon and as long as it is in possession of the terms:

Imo dico quod si omnes sensus essent falsi, a quibus accipiuntur tales termini, vel quod plus est ad deceptionem, aliqui sensus falsi, et aliqui sensus veri, intellectus circa talia principia non deciperetur, quia semper haberet apud se terminos qui essent causa veritatis (*ibid.*).

In his commentary on metaphysics, Scotus explains the reason why first principles produce infallible certainty in the intellect even though the terms are apprehended through deceptive sense perception. With regard to first principles, the intellect depends on sense perception for its first operation only, i.e., for the simple apprehension of the terms. The composition of the terms is effected independently of the senses:

Intellectus judicat...per notitiam ab actu sensus acceptam occasion-aliter, vel quoad apprehensionem simplicium, non quoad compositionem principiorum (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 13; VII, 58b).

The first operation of the intellect is always true<sup>17</sup> even when it follows upon an erroneous sense perception. Thus the simple concept of whiteness obtained by falsely apprehending a black object as white is exactly identical with the concept of whiteness obtained from a white object. For a true concept of whiteness it is sufficient that a species or image truly representing whiteness be transmitted to the intellect:

Prima operatio intellectus semper vera est, licet sequens sensum errantem; ita enim concipitur albedo, si visus apprehendit illud esse

17. For an explanation of how simple concepts may be considered as true cf. *supra*, pp. 56 ff.



album quod est nigrum, sicut si albedo conciperetur a sensu vere vidente album, quia sufficit quod species vere repraesentativa albi veniat ad intellectum, ad hoc ut simplici apprehensione album vere apprehendatur (*loc. cit.*, n. 14; 59a).

### 3. *Experience Helpful in Acquisition of First Principles*

The above considerations concerning the role of sense perception in first principles may give rise to the impression that Scotus underrates the importance of experience in his theory of knowledge. This, however, is not the case. We must bear in mind that in the present question the Franciscan Doctor is opposing absolute scepticism which denies every kind of knowledge and certainty based on sense perception.<sup>18</sup> In order to convince these thinkers of at least one certain cognition, Scotus was obliged, if not to disregard sense perception altogether, at least to avoid basing his argumentation on it as on a trustworthy source of information. All he wants his opponents to acknowledge is that we do have some sense perceptions which furnish us certain notions or terms, as, for instance, the notion of "whole" and of "part," or of "being" and "not-being." It makes no difference whether or not these terms have any objective validity. Scotus shows that, as soon as this is admitted, the intellect is in possession of the elements with which to formulate first evident principles, and this independently of any outward reality, and in spite of any illusion in the senses.

On the other hand, Scotus realizes that the number of absolute sceptics is rather limited. Furthermore, nobody is more firmly convinced of the reliability of sense perception than Scotus, provided the senses are controlled and checked by the intellect. Far from underrating experience, he considers it a valuable ally of the intellect, even for the acquisition of first principles. He actually asserts that the truth of certain principles can be known through frequent sensible, memorative and experimental cognition which shows the association in actually existing things of the terms of the principles. Thus the principle, "Every whole is greater than any of its

18. Cf. Scotus' introductory remark: *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, n. 7; IX, 173a: "Ut in nullis cognoscibilibus locum habeat error Academicorum..."

parts," can be arrived at through repeated observation of the relation between a concrete whole and its parts:

Conceptus autem complexi, si sint primorum principiorum...etiam cognosci possunt quia veri sunt ex frequenti cognitione sensitiva, memorativa, et experimentalis, per quas cognoscimus terminos talis principii, in suis singularibus in re esse conjunctos, sicut sensus frequenter vidit hanc totalitatem et hanc minoritatem conjungi (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 4; VII, 53b).

Needless to say that Scotus' admission of experimental knowledge as conducive to evident principles does not militate against his definition which places evidence in the terms. On the one hand, Scotus' definition of the self-evident proposition does not exclude sense perception but only the need of a *trustworthy* sense perception; on the other hand, knowledge of principles through experience does not dispense with the terms. Experience leads up to the principle precisely because it sees the association of the terms in re.

Scotus repeatedly states that experimental knowledge<sup>19</sup> is helpful in moving the intellect to give a readier assent to affirmative and negative principles, if the composition or division of the extremes is apprehended by the senses. Sensible apprehension of the composition or division, however, is not necessarily required to produce assent to the truth, although experience cannot be dispensed with for the apprehension of the terms. The intellect gives immediate assent to the principle of contradiction, even though the senses never apprehend a formal affirmation or negation in reality.<sup>20</sup> And supposing that the senses do actually apprehend the association or dissociation of terms in reality, yet the certitude produced by the

19. "Experientia," in the scholastic sense, means a "frequens acceptio sensibilibus" (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 5; VII, 53b).

20. Cf. E. Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot" in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, II (1927), p. 122: "Personne n'a jamais vu de ses yeux une affirmation ni une négation; cependant, une fois que l'intellect a formé ces deux concepts à partir du sensible, il est capable de conclure: *de omni est affirmatio vera, vel negatio vera*. Prétendra-t-on que l'intellect ait été renseigné par les sens sur la vérité de cette proposition? Evidemment non; jamais nous n'avons perçu le rapport d'une chose à son affirmation ou à sa négation, pas plus qu'une affirmation ou une négation en elle-même; la position de ce rapport est donc l'oeuvre du seul intellect.



natural light of the intellect is still greater than that proceeding from sense experience. Even if a sense perception is false and known as such, the intellect nevertheless is able to formulate a true principle by means of the simple notions thus obtained:

Juvat cognitio experimentalis ut citius assentiatur principio affirmativo, si per sensum cognoscatur conjunctio extremorum in singulo, negativo si disjunctio, sed non est necessaria nec ipsa, nec aliqua apprehensio sensitiva. Licet enim nunquam per aliquem sensum videatur haec separatio in re, si tamen ex sensibilibus apprehenditur affirmatio vel negatio, et intellectus componat hanc propositionem: De omni est affirmatio, vel negatio vera, assentitur isti. Et etiam ubi sensus percipit conjunctionem singularium terminorum in re, adhuc certius adhaeretur principio complexo per naturale lumen intellectus quam propter aliquam apprehensionem sensus. Si enim in apprehensione sensus esset error, et intellectus judicaret sensum errare in hoc et tamen a sensu errate acciperet notitiam simplicium, et illa componeret ex sua virtute, adhuc intellectus circa illud principium non erraret, quantum ad veritatem compositionis (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 5; VII, 54a).

It may be asked how Scotus' statement that the truth of principles can be known independently of true sense perceptions is to be reconciled with Aristotle's saying that all intellectual knowledge is had either through syllogisms or through induction.<sup>21</sup> According to the Stagirite, even first principles are known through induction. This would seem to imply that singulars are better known than universal principles, otherwise these could not be derived from them. Scotus replies that induction is here taken in the sense that at least *some* singular must be known before a universal principle is formulated. For the terms of the principles come to us from the senses:

Contra praedicta arguitur: Dicit Aristoteles I. *Post.*, omnia cognoscuntur per syllogismum, vel per inductionem; conclusiones per syllogismum, principia per inductionem. Sed hoc tu negas, quia principia notiora sunt secundum te singularibus inducentibus. - Potest responderi ad intellectum ejus ibi, quod sensus est necessarius propter notitiam terminorum. Unde universalialia non cognoscuntur sine inductione, id est, sine cognitione alicujus singularis (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 16; VII, 60a).

"Induction" must not be taken in this connection as a proof of the principles, but rather as a *manuductio*, inasmuch as it gives the intellect the material to work with. It stops, so to speak, at the door of the intellect which dispenses with its further assistance:

21. *Posterior Analytics* I, c. 1; 71a 1-9.

Inductio est hic non simpliciter...nec forte probatio dicitur, sed deductio, quia quandocumque iste (intellectus) intelligit principium, magis adhaeret illi quam singulari inducenti (*loc. cit.*, 60b).

We shall see later that Scotus does not deny the validity of induction as a means of acquiring certain knowledge; on the contrary, he develops it to a remarkable degree of perfection. However, since induction starts from contingent singulars, it never yields the grade of evidence found in the first universal principles. For the same reason the knowledge deduced from self-evident principles is more scientific (i.e., more certain, because more evident) than that obtained through induction. Thus the conclusion, "Every whole is greater than its part; therefore, this particular whole and that particular whole is greater than its part," is more scientific than the following induction: "This particular whole, and that particular whole is greater than its part; therefore, every whole is greater than its part:"

Inductio non sufficit ad scientiam, nec ideo scitur universale quia ex particularibus deducitur. Unde magis sequitur scientia quia si omne totum est majus vel magis sua parte, ergo hoc totum et illud, quam e converso, hoc et illud, ergo omne (*Oxon.* III, d. 24, q. un., f. 167v, b; n. 19, XV, 49a).

Intimately related with self-evident propositions are the conclusions deduced from them through syllogistic reasoning. Scotus' treatment of the evidence of conclusions is rather cursory. For this reason we must content ourselves with a brief analysis of the nature of the syllogism and the evidence proper to it. This will be the subject matter of our next chapter.



### CHAPTER III

#### EVIDENCE IN SYLLOGISTIC REASONING

After explaining the evidence and resulting certitude of the first principles, Scotus briefly alludes to the evidence of syllogistic reasoning as another source of certain knowledge:

Habita certitudine de principiis primis, patet quomodo habebitur de conclusionibus illatis ex eis, propter evidentiam formae<sup>1</sup> syllogismi perfecti, cum certitudo conclusionis tantummodo dependeat ex certitudine principiorum et ex evidentia illationis (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, a; n. 8, IX, 174a).

Since in the present question the Franciscan Doctor intends to prove the possibility and actual existence in the mind of true and infallible knowledge, he confines his considerations to the order of strictest evidence. He refers only to evident and necessary conclusions drawn from evident and necessary premises (matter) through evident syllogistic reasoning (form). These two conditions are fulfilled, on the one hand, if the premises are first principles, and, on the other, if the form of the syllogism<sup>2</sup> is a perfect one. In order to understand this second condition we must first consider the nature of syllogistic reasoning.

#### A. THE NATURE OF SYLLOGISTIC REASONING

"A syllogism," writes Aristotle,<sup>3</sup> "is discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so." A syllogism is made up of two premises and a conclusion following from the premises. Any argument containing less or more than two premises is not considered a syllogism in the strict sense. Moreover, the syllogism must con-

1. *Formae add. Viv.*

2. For a critical evaluation of the various forms of syllogisms vide R. Messner, O.F.M., *Schauendes und begriffliches Erkennen nach D. Scotus* (Freiburg, 1942), pp. 280-292.

3. *Prior Analytics* I, c. 1; 24b 18-20.

tain no more and no less than three terms. These terms must be thus disposed in the premises that the conclusion follows in virtue of this distribution of the terms. One of the terms occurs twice in the premises, viz., once in the first or major premise, and once in the second or minor premise. This term is called the middle term, because it is placed somehow between the major extreme and the minor extreme, and because it is with the help of this term that the relation or connection between the two other terms is brought out. "In the first premise," writes Mastrius,<sup>4</sup> "one of the extremes is connected with the middle term, and in the other premise the second extreme is connected with the same middle term; in the conclusion the two extremes are connected with each other." Scotus himself gives essentially the same interpretation of the nature of syllogistic reasoning. "In the same degree as two things are identical with a third," he writes, "they are also identical with each other. For we cannot conclude to the identity of two extremes unless they are both identical with a middle term in that same respect, and unless the middle term remains identical with itself. Every syllogistic figure holds true in virtue of this principle. If either one of these conditions is lacking, i.e., if either the identity of the middle term with itself, or that of the extremes with the middle term is absent, then we have no longer a syllogism but a fallacy of the accident:"

Quaecumque aliqua identitate sunt eadem alicui, tali identitate inter se sic sunt eadem; quia non potest concludi aliqua identitas extremorum inter se nisi secundum illam identitatem sint eadem medio et medium sin se sit sic idem. Et per hanc propositionem sic intellectam tenet omnis forma syllogistica; ommissa enim altera conditione, vel unitatis medii in se, vel extremorum ad medium, non est syllogismus, sed paradoxismus accidentis (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 3, f. 24r, b; *Viv.* q. 7, n. 47, VIII, 630a).

Hence the validity and evidence of syllogistic reasoning, too, is reduced in the last analysis, to a self-evident principle, viz., "Quae sunt eadem uni tertio sunt eadem inter se," or in a negative formulation: "Quorum unum non est idem cum uno tertio, cum quo alterum non est idem, non possunt esse eadem inter se."

4. *Cursus philosophicus*, tom. I, Logica (Pars Prima Institutionum), tract. III, c. 5, n. 99.



## B. THE PERFECT SYLLOGISM AND ITS EVIDENCE

Now we are able to understand what a perfect syllogism is.<sup>5</sup> According to the distribution of the terms in the premises, the Scholastics commonly distinguish three figures of syllogistic reasoning. The figures vary according as the middle term appears (1) as subject in the major and as predicate in the minor, (2) as subject both in the major and the minor, or (3) as predicate in the major and in the minor. Again, within these figures various modes are distinguished, according to the quantity and quality of the propositions. Every mode, in turn, is said to conclude either directly or indirectly. In a direct conclusion the major extreme is predicated of the minor; in an indirect conclusion the minor is predicated of the major.

When speaking of the "evidence of the form of a perfect syllogism," Scotus obviously refers to the first figure, and among the various modes of this figure, to those which conclude directly. For it is only in the first four modes of the first figure (viz., in Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio) that the mutual identity or inclusion of the extremes in the middle term appears evidently, i.e., in virtue of the syllogistic structure itself, and without further proof or explanation. In no other figure does the relation appear more clearly. In point of fact, the other figures must be reduced to one of these four perfect modes of the first figure if we wish them to become perfectly evident.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Evident and True Conclusions from Evident  
and True Principles*

The preceding considerations on the nature of the syllogism apply to every syllogism formulated according to the rules of deductive reasoning, irrespective of whether the syllogism is true or false. From the point of view of the form even false premises yield valid conclusions, and this in an evident manner. The validity of the conclusion is independent of the content of the syllogism.<sup>7</sup>

5. Cf. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* I, c. 4; 25b 27-26b 33.

6. Aristotle, *loc. cit.*, c. 6; 29a 30-31: "It is clear that all the imperfect syllogisms are made perfect by means of the first figure."

7. Cf. *Metaph.* IV, q. 4, n. 6; VII, 180a.

In order to obtain a true conclusion it must first be ascertained that the premises are true. Likewise, in order to arrive at an evidently true conclusion we must make sure that the premises are evidently true. Scotus, as we have seen, wants to prove against the sceptics and illuminationists that true and certain knowledge is possible to natural reason. He refrains, therefore, from considering here the less evident forms of syllogistic reasoning, and is satisfied with pointing out those conclusions which are unquestionably evident both in regard to the inference (*consequentia*) and to the truth of the conclusion (*consequens*). Such are all the conclusions drawn from evident principles. A syllogism which is evident both as to form (or logical structure) and to matter (of content of the premises) cannot but yield an evident conclusion.<sup>8</sup>

2. *Effects of Syllogistic Evidence: Necessary  
Assent and Absolute Certitude*

Two acts of assent can be distinguished in the intellect, according to the nature of evidence proper to a proposition. One is given to a proposition for its own sake, and the other for the sake of something other than itself. The first act of assent is produced by the principles which are evident *per se*, and the second by the conclusions which are evident *per aliud*. The latter differs from the former inasmuch as its truth is received from the principles:

In intellectu sunt duo actus assentiendi alicui complexo: unus quo assentitur alicui vero propter se, sicut principio; alius quo assentitur alicui vero complexo non propter se, sed propter aliud verum, sicut conclusioni...; conclusioni assentitur propter principium quia conclusio veritatem suam habet a principio...Sunt enim alteri propter alteram evidentiam hujus et illius veri (*Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 3, f. 11v, a; n. 2, VIII, 344a-b).

In like manner there is a difference between the certitude of the two acts of assent. While a principle is certain of itself due to its evident truth, a conclusion becomes certain only through the causality of principles:

Cognitio principii seipsa est certa vel ab objecto, scilicet a principio quod est a se verum manifestum...Conclusio autem est certa per principium tamquam per causam suae certitudinis (*Quodl.* q. 17, n. 11; XXVI, 220a).<sup>9</sup>

8. Cf. *Metaph.* VI, q. 1, n. 4; VII, 305.

9. Cf. *Metaph.* VI, q. 3, n. 11; VII, 342b.



Since an effect cannot be equal to its cause in perfection, it follows that the certitude of conclusions is necessarily inferior to that of principles:

Conclusio est minus certa quam principium, ex quo tota certitudo illius est a certitudine principii (*Oxon.* III, d. 23, q. un., f. 165v, a; n. 8, XV, 12a).<sup>10</sup>

Despite this lesser grade of certitude a conclusion derived from first principles compels the assent of the intellect, once the latter apprehends the terms and the syllogistic arrangement of the premises. The intellect cannot but give its unrestricted assent to an inference formulated on the basis of the evidence of syllogistic discourse. Not even the will is able to prevent this assent or to induce the intellect into error concerning these conclusions:

Forma syllogistica est evidens ex se omni intellectui, patet ex definitione syllogismi perfecti, I. *Priorum*; ergo terminis apprehensis et compositis, et facta deductione syllogistica, necesse est intellectum acquiescere conclusioni, cujus notitia dependet praecise ex notitia terminorum principii et notitia deductionis syllogisticae; igitur impossibile est voluntatem facere intellectum considerantem principia per deductionem syllogisticam errare circa conclusionem...; et ideo nullo modo excaecabitur intellectus ita ut erret (*Oxon.* III, d. 36, q. un., f. 178r, b; n. 12, XV, 631a).<sup>11</sup>

This compulsion exercised by the evident syllogistic reasoning process, however, must not be confused with the *evidence itself* of the process. Objective evidence does not depend on, or consist in, the easiness or readiness with which a conclusion is apprehended. Scotus realizes that there are those who contend that a proposition is not demonstrated because it fails to compel the assent of every intellect. "This objection is worthless," he replies, "because if it did hold, then it would follow that there is no demonstration in geometry. For not a single geometrical proof compels (the assent of) every intellect." Scotus, of course, is far from implying that such demonstrations are not capable of producing evident and certain knowledge. If they fail, at times, to effect such

10. Cf. *Report. Paris*, III, d. 23, q. un., n. 10; XXIII, 437b.

11. Cf. *Oxon.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, n. 10; XX, 40b: "Experimur quod cognoscimus ignotum ex noto per discursum, ita quod non possumus dissentire evidētiaē discursus nec cognitionis illatae."

knowledge, this is due to the absence of certain indispensable prerequisites, such as an adequate concept of the terms:

(Objection:) Illa non est demonstratio, quia non cogit omnem intellectum, et demonstratio debet omnem intellectum cogere.

(Answer:) Sed illud nihil valet, quia tunc sequitur quod nulla esset demonstratio in Geometria; nulla enim est quae cogit omnem intellectum. Unde potest esse demonstratio specialis et potissima, licet non statim assentiat intellectus notis terminis confuse (*Report. Par. II, d. 1, q. 4, n. 12; XXII, 544a*).

We must, therefore, distinguish between the epistemological and the psychological evidence of conclusions. As Messner<sup>12</sup> points out, a conclusion does not become evident and critically certain because it is actually apprehended as caused by the premises. It is sufficient that the relation between premises and conclusion be *such as to be capable* of conveying the truth of the conclusion to any intellect.

12. *Op. cit.*, pp. 283 f.



# PART THREE

## FUNCTION OF EVIDENCE FOR OTHER KINDS OF CERTITUDE

### PRELIMINARIES: SCOTUS EXTENDS THE CONCEPT OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Every student of classical Scholasticism knows the strict conditions a discipline had to fulfill to deserve the name of *scientia* or scientific knowledge. As Wolter<sup>1</sup> points out, scientific knowledge "is understood primarily of a single proposition which forms the conclusion of a demonstrative syllogism. Only secondarily it is understood of a body of such conclusions generically or specifically related in the sense that they deal more or less with the same subject matter." To be strictly scientific, a proposition has to fulfill the following requirements: First, it must be certain, i.e., exclusive of deception and doubt; secondly, it must be of a necessary object; thirdly, it must be produced by a cause that is evident to the intellect; fourthly, it must be applied to the object by a syllogistic reasoning process:

Scientia stricte sumpta quatuor includit, videlicet quod sit cognitio certa absque deceptione et dubitatione; secundo quod sit de cognito necessario; tertio quod sit causata a causa evidente intellectui; quarto quod sit applicata ad cognitum per syllogismum vel per discursum syllogisticum (*Oxon. prol. q. 7, f. 6r, a; Viv. qq. 3 et 4 lateralis, n. 26; VIII, 183b*).<sup>2</sup>

Scotus insists on these conditions wherever there is a question of scientific knowledge in the strictest sense. But the Franciscan Doctor does in no wise confine certain knowledge to the demonstrative *scientiae*. An unconditional insistence on the aforementioned conditions would reduce the sphere of certain knowledge to an ex-

1. "The 'Theologism' of Duns Scotus" in *Franciscan Studies*, VII (1947), p. 264. Fr. Wolter refers here to *Metaph.* VI, q. 1, n. 2; VII, 303a.

2. Cf. *Oxon.* III, d. 24, q. 1, n. 13; XV, 44b; *Report. Par.* III, d. 24, q. un., n. 16; XXXIII, 454a-b.

tremely limited area. Especially the condition of necessity on the part of the object is not always fulfilled, as in all disciplines concerned with contingent objects. Contrary to what takes place in demonstrative or *a priori* sciences, there is no necessary relation between a contingent object and its predicates. The knowledge of a contingent object is not sufficient to convey by itself the knowledge of its properties or qualities, because these are merely accidental:

Contingentia non habent subjectum secundum quod ponitur subjectum in scientia, quia nulla scientia continet illud quod est sibi accidentale (*Report. Exam. prol. q. 2, f. 7r*).<sup>3</sup>

Would it be right to question the reliability of knowledge on the grounds that it is concerned with contingent objects? Or to deny every scientific character to contingent knowledge? Scotus does not think so. "The perfection of scientific knowledge," he says, "consists in its being certain and evident." He does not hesitate in dispensing with objective necessity as long as knowledge is based on objective evidence:

In scientia illud perfectionis est quod sit cognitio certa et evidens. Quod autem sit de necessario objecto, haec est conditio objecti, non cognitionis (*Oxon. prol. q. 7, f. 6r, b; Viv. qq. 3 et 4 later., n. 28, VIII, 187a-b*).<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, far from restricting certain knowledge to necessary or demonstrated conclusions, Scotus defends the reliability and sufficiency of sense perceptions as a source of evident certitude:

Visio extremorum veritatis contingentis et unionis eorum necessario causat certitudinem de tali veritate evidente (*loc. cit.*; 187b).<sup>5</sup>

Scotus, therefore, has full confidence that under the influence of objective evidence the powers of the human mind are perfectly suf-

3. Cf. *Oxon. prol. q. 3, f. 5r, a; Viv. q. 2 later., n. 13, VIII, 156a*: "Nullum subjectum continet nisi veritates necessarias de ipso; quia ad contingentes de ipso aequaliter se habet ex se et ad oppositas." See also: *Quodl.*, q. 7, n. 10; XXV, 291a.

4. Cf. *Oxon. II, d. 5, q. 2, n. 7; XII, 317b; Metaph. VI, q. 2, n. 4; VII, 327a*.

5. Cf. Efrem Bettoni, O.F.M., *L'ascesa a Dio in Duns Scoto* (Milan, 1943), p. 36: "Duns Scoto...evita l'esagerazione di considerare valevole solo ciò che si può dimostrare con metodo matematico...Infatti l'esperienza ci mette sott'occhio fatti di cui non possiamo negare la verità..."



ficient to arrive at a certain, and in many cases, infallible knowledge of contingent things and truths.

This broad conception of scientific knowledge must be understood in connection with Scotus' teachings on intuitive cognition. It is intuitive cognition which "gives us knowledge of an existent as existing."<sup>6</sup> As Day<sup>7</sup> remarks, "Scotus fully appreciated the epistemological significance of intuitive cognition, especially in view of his assertion that without intuitive cognition our intellects could not be certain of the existence of *any* objects:

Cognitio quae dicitur intuitiva potest esse intellectiva, alioquin intellectus non esset certus de aliqua existentia alicujus objecti (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, f. 267v, b; n. 12, XX, 305b)."

To this text another important passage may be added where Scotus states that the truth of contingent propositions cannot be known from the nature of the terms (i.e., *a priori*), but solely by an intellectual *visio* or intuition of the terms as actually united or separated *in re*:<sup>8</sup>

Quandoque (complexionem cognosco esse veram) nullo modo ex natura terminorum vel includentium ipsos, sed a causa extrinseca conjungente ipsa vel disjungente... Quando (intellectus) componit terminos propositionis contingentis, non videt actum esse conformem nisi videndo habitudinem terminorum in re, quia causa extrinseca si facit eam, facit circa terminos ut in re, non ut in conceptu, et tunc oportet *videre intellectualiter terminos in re conjungi vel dividi* (Metaph. VI, q. 3, n. 10; VII, 341b-342a).

Scotus' insistence on intuitive cognition, however, must not be interpreted as if he considered intuition a completely sufficient source of certitude for all contingent knowledge. We shall see in the subsequent chapters that the intellect is frequently faced with apparently conflicting evidences in the contingent world. In such

6. Sebastian J. Day, O.F.M., *Intuitive Cognition a Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics* (St. Bonaventure, 1947), p. 82

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 82 f.

8. The historic importance of Scotus' teaching on the evident certitude of intuitive cognition cannot be sufficiently emphasized. See: Messner (*op. cit.*, p. 364): "Scotus hat durch seine Lehre von der Intuition und ihrer einwandfreien Sicherheit, sowie durch seine Lehre, dass Existenz grundsatzlich nur durch Intuition sicherzustellen sei und auch nicht aus apriorischen Urteilen sich ableiten lasse, eine Ueberwindung des einseitigen Aristotelischen Intellektualismus vorbereitet." Cf. also Bettoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 ff.

cases, we are unable to decide on the basis of intuition alone how these evidences may be reconciled with one another, or which of two or more "conflicting" evidences the intellect should trust. Intuition is incompetent for this task, because it remains on the level of simple apprehension.<sup>9</sup> Intuition establishes no comparisons between simple concepts, nor does it present one concept more emphatically than another. Conflicting evidences, therefore, must be reconciled or corrected by means of some higher evidence. This higher evidence is present in propositions which are evident of themselves, irrespective of whether their simple concepts are received from true or false sense perceptions. These propositions play a particularly important role in establishing the truth-value of induction and sense knowledge. The only kind of contingent knowledge which dispenses with an intervention of higher evidence is introspection. Introspective knowledge constitutes, so to speak, a class of its own in the sphere of contingent knowledge. Its certitude is given with the intrinsic evidence of internal acts and states.

Thus, Scotus, while avoiding an exaggerated rationalism on the one hand, does not commit the error of falling into a materialistic sensualism on the other. He succeeds in blending the various forms of knowledge into a harmonious whole in which inferior and superior faculties assist and complement one another, thus cooperating toward the acquisition of full certitude.

9. Day, *op. cit.*, p. 49.



## CHAPTER I

### EVIDENCE OF INTERNAL ACTS AND STATES

Throughout the works of Scotus we find allusions to introspection as a source of certain knowledge. Although he does not use the word "evidence" in his description of internal experience, there is no doubt that Scotus considers it as truly evident,<sup>1</sup> as will be shown in this chapter.

#### A. INTERNAL EXPERIENCE A SOURCE OF EVIDENCE

Introspective cognition fulfills to the letter all the conditions laid down for evident contingent knowledge. We have seen that evident knowledge of contingents presupposes intuition, i.e., a direct contact with an existing and present object. There is no doubt that introspective knowledge meets with this requirement, since nothing can be more closely present to the mind than its own acts.

While describing our consciousness of internal acts and states, Scotus makes repeated use of the expression "experimur." Day<sup>2</sup> has proved that this expression, too, implies a true intuition, i.e., an immediate interior perception of the acts and states of our soul.

This intuitive and evident experience is present, first of all, in the intellective faculty. Not only do we have direct intellectual cognitions of many things and facts, but we also know the act by which we apprehend them. This is done through a reflection on the direct act of knowledge. Furthermore, we know by experience that we give infallible assent to certain propositions, viz., to the first

1. This is clear from the adjective "manifest" which Scotus employs as an equivalent of "evident," when referring to acts of the will and intellect: "Primo videndum est de illis quae manifesta sunt inesse in mente...Quantum ad primum, experimur in nobis esse actum intellectionis et actum volitionis" (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 9, n. 3; IX, 406a). Cf. also: *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 4, n. 2; XX, 376a; *ibid.*, n. 7, 384a-b; *Quodl.* q. 15, n. 2; XXVI, 119b.

2. *Op. cit.*, pp. 125 f. Cf. also: Ephrem Longpré, O.F.M., "The Psychology of Duns Scotus and its Modernity" in *Franciscan Educational Conference*, XIII (1931), pp. 19-77; P.C. Albanese, "La teoria delle idee senza immagini nella psicologia di Scoto" in *Studi Francescani*, I (1914), p. 39, note 2.

principles, so as to exclude the possibility of contradiction or deception. In like manner we experience the evidence of syllogistic reasoning processes:

Experimur quod cognoscimus actum illum quo cognoscimus ista et illud, secundum quod inest nobis iste actus, quod est per actum reflexum super actum rectum...Experimur etiam quod assentimus complexionibus quibusdam sine possibilitate contradicendi vel errandi, utpote primis principiis. Experimur etiam quod cognoscimus ignotum ex noto per discursum, ita quod non possumus dissentire evidētiaē discursus, nec cognitionis illatae (*Oxon.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, f. 250r, b; n. 10, XX, 40a-b).

The immediate and evident character of these intellectual acts is forcefully brought out by Scotus. It is useless, he says, to argue with those who obstinately refuse to admit these internal experiences. It is impossible to convince them of anything whatsoever, just as it is an idle task to dispute about colors with a person whose experiences, either allegedly or really, run counter to those of the normal run of man:

Si quis proterve neget illos actus inesse homini, nec se experiri istos actus in se, non est ulterius cum eo disputandum, sed dicendum est sibi quod est brutum; sicut cum dicente, non video colorem ibi non est disputandum, sed dicendum sibi, tu indiges sensu, quia caecus es (*loc. cit.*, n. 11; 40b).

This confidence in the cognitive powers of man is also the deeper reason for Scotus' rejection of Plato's innate ideas and principles. In this he follows Aristotle<sup>3</sup> who calls it incongruous that a most certain knowledge, as that of the first principles, should be veiled to the demonstrator. And yet, Aristotle adds, we do not experience this knowledge before we acquire it through learning. Hence, it cannot be innate in the soul. Scotus confirms Aristotle's argument by remarking that not even the inferior degrees of knowledge are present in the intellect without the latter being conscious of their presence. Thus we are perfectly aware of our opinions, doubts, beliefs, although they yield only a limited grade of certitude, or none at all. As St. Augustine<sup>4</sup> points out, everyone perceives or sees the faith within himself:

3. *Posterior Analytics* II, c. 19; 99b 18-27.

4. *De Trinitate* XIII, c. 2; PL 42, col. 1016.



Contra opinionem Platonis arguit Aristoteles II *Post.*, c. ult., sic: Inconveniens est cognitiones certissimas demonstrantem latere, sed antequam addiscamus non percipimus eas in nobis; ergo non insunt. Confirmatur major, quia habitus intellectualis etiam debilissimus non est in nobis, quando certi sumus de illo quod nobis inest, nec latet; omnis enim opinans, dubitans, et credens certus est se opinari, dubitare et credere. Unde Augustinus 13. *De Trinitate*, c. 1 et 3: Fidem unusquisque in se videt, etc. (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 9; VII, 56a).<sup>5</sup>

A great number of similar statements can be read in Scotus' works. In the present chapter, however, we shall limit ourselves to quotations and comments on the significant texts found in the discussion about the possibility of natural knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Against the negative opinion of the Illuminationists, who appeal to the authority of St. Augustine, Scotus adduces, first of all, a series of quotations from the same Christian Doctor. He thus shows that St. Augustine, far from denying natural certitude, defends it on the basis of internal experience. From these texts it appears that there are many states and operations, in both the intellectual and emotional spheres, of which man is immediately and absolutely certain. Thus, we are always sure of our being alive as of a fundamental state in all our activities:<sup>7</sup>

Patet...quod Augustinus concedit certitudinem de actibus nostris ibidem (*De Trinitate*), 15 lib., c. eodem, vel 32: Sive dormiat, sive vigilet, vivit; quia et dormire, et in somniis videre, viventis est (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, b; n. 6, IX, 109a).<sup>8</sup>

The objection that *to live* is not a second but a first act, and that we cannot therefore be aware of it, just as we are not directly aware e.g., of the potencies of our soul, is obviated by St. Augustine who adds that at least upon reflection we are infallibly certain of this fact:

Quod si dicas: vivere non esse actum secundum, sed primum; sequitur ibidem: Si aliquis dicat, scio me scire, me vivere, falli non potest,

5. Cf. *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 2; XXI, 318b; *Report. Par.* prol. q. 2, n. 7; XXII, 37a.

6. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4; IX, 162-207.

7. *De Trinitate* XV, c. 12; PL 42, col. 1073s.

8. Cf. *Report. Par.* II, d. 3, q. 3, n. 11; XXII, 593a: "Anima nostra certa est quod vivit, vel quod est quo totum vivit." See also: *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 8, n. 5; XXI, 306b; *Metaph.* VII, q. 18, n. 8; VII, 458a; *Quodl.* q. 8, n. 12; XXV, 350b; q. 14, n. 25, XXVI, 106a-b.

etiam quotiescumque reflectendo super primum scitum (*ibid.*).

Likewise everyone is conscious of the operations of his intellect and will.<sup>9</sup> Nobody doubts the personal character of these acts, or their existence in the soul. Again, this first awareness of internal acts can also be the object of a reflection. The resulting "double" consciousness, a consciousness of consciousness, can further be known through a new reflection, and so forth *usque in infinitum*:

Et ibidem si quis dicat, scio me hoc velle, et hoc me scire scio, jam his duobus et tertium potest addere, quod haec duo sciat, et quartum, quod haec duo scire se sciat, et similiter in infinitum numerum pergere (*ibid.*).<sup>10</sup>

Even granted that the mind should actually err, it still has the unshakeable certitude of its desire not to err. Indeed, it is this attitude of mind alone which urges man to persevere in the quest for truth, despite the many errors to which he is exposed:

Ibidem,<sup>11</sup> si quis dicat, errare nolo, nonne eum errare nolle verum est? (*Ibid.*, 169b).

Another fundamental certitude is brought out in the consideration of St. Augustine that the soul can never be in error concerning its desire for happiness. This consciousness is so certain that St. Augustine considers it altogether out of order to question the truthfulness and certainty of a person who tells me that he wants to be happy:

Et ibidem,<sup>12</sup> si quis dicat, volo esse beatus, quomodo non impudenter respondetur, forte falleris (*ibid.*, 169a).

So much for St. Augustine's teaching on the natural certitude of internal acts and states in general. From here, Scotus proceeds to examine the peculiar evidence of certain internal phenomena and their function in the realm of knowledge.

9. Cf. L. de Sesma, "La volonté dans la philosophie de J. Duns Scot" in *Etudes Franciscans*, XXXIX (1927), pp. 248-249: "Nous voyons qu'il est en notre pouvoir de poser un acte de vouloir ou de l'arrêter quand et comme il nous plait, de nous décider pour un bien ou son contraire, de nous abstenir de l'un et de l'autre."

10. *De Trinitate* XV, c. 12, PL 42, cols. 1073-1074.

11. *De Trinitate* XV, c. 12; PL 42, col. 1074.

12. *Loc. cit.*



## B. INTERNAL ACTS AND STATES ARE SELF-EVIDENT

Many of our acts, Scotus maintains, are known with a certitude comparable to that of the first self-evident principles. In other words, they are known of themselves. In his *Metaphysics*,<sup>13</sup> speaking of those who "puzzle over the question whether we are now asleep or awake," Aristotle says that all such questions are meaningless. And he goes on to say: "These people demand that a reason shall be given for everything," and to reproach them "for seeking a reason for things for which no reason can be given; for the starting point of demonstration is not demonstration." Therefore, according to the same Stagirite, the fact that we are awake is known of itself as much as is a principle of demonstration:

De tertiis cognoscibilibus, scilicet de actibus nostris, dico quod est certitudo de multis eorum sicut de primis et per se notis,<sup>14</sup> quod patet IV *Metaph.*, ubi dicit Philosophus de rationibus dicentium omnia apparentia esse vera, quod isti rationes quaerunt utrum nunc vigilemus an dormiamus. Ponunt autem idem omnes dubitationes tales, omnium enim rationem hi significant esse. Et subdit: Rationem quaerunt quorum non est ratio; demonstrationis enim principii non est demonstratio. Ergo per ipsum ibidem, nos vigilare est per se notum, sicut principium demonstrationis (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, b; n. 10, IX, 179a).

Scotus terms the awareness of internal acts not simply evident but *self-evident*. What justification does he have in ascribing this highest degree of certitude and evidence to purely contingent acts? In Scotus' mind the fact that we are treating here of contingent states of affairs does not obviate our speaking of self-evidence. For in the contingent sphere, too, a certain order is to be observed. Indeed, unless we admit some first and immediate propositions in the contingent order, we must fall back either on an infinite regress or on some necessary propositions from which contingent propositions proceed. Both of these hypotheses, however, are impossible and absurd:

Nec obstat quod est contingens, quia...ordo est in contingentibus, quod aliqua est prima et immediata, vel esset processus in infinitum in

13. B. IV, c. 6; 1011a 4-13.

14. Sicut de principiis per se notis *Viv.* There is obviously no essential difference between the two readings, for a few lines later in the *Ass. MS.* Scotus refers to the same acts as being known "sicut principium demonstrationis."

contingentibus, vel aliquod contingens sequeretur ex causa necessaria: quorum utrumque est impossibile (*ibid.*).

Aristotle's remark on the indemonstrability of the principles of demonstration can be applied to the contingent order as well. In a series of necessary propositions we arrive at a primary proposition or first principle which is immediately evident. Likewise in contingent propositions we must finally stop at some first contingent proposition which admits of no further reason or cause than itself:

Indisciplinati est quaerere omnium demonstrationes...principiorum enim non est demonstratio; et eodem modo in contingentibus; alioquin foret processus in infinitum in contingentibus, quia contingentia non sequuntur ex necessariis (*Oxon.* II, d. 1, q. 2, f. 98v, b; n. 9, XI, 65a).<sup>15</sup>

In order to understand Scotus' expositions on the immediate evidence of contingent propositions, we must briefly recall the notion of contingency. Contingency implies indifference to existence and non-existence. "I call that contingent whose opposite could have come about when this came about," writes Scotus.<sup>16</sup> To say that something is contingent is equivalent to saying that it "can pass from non-existence to existence."<sup>17</sup> - For Scotus, the whole world bears the mark of radical contingency. Its origin, therefore, cannot be necessary. For if it were, then all things would be necessary. It is clear, then, that in our inquiry of the causes, we must finally arrive at a first cause whose activity is contingent, and yet cannot be accounted for by any other cause. In other words, we must arrive at a first, immediate, and contingent cause which has the whole reason of its activity in itself alone. In this free creative activity of the Divine Will, Scotus locates the root of all contingency.<sup>18</sup> With reference to God, therefore, the contingent order is indemonstrable and irretraceable to a higher cause. To ask why God

15. Cf. *Report. Mag.* I, d. 8, q. 7, f. 37v: "Sicut in necessariis est invenire propositiones immediatas quarum non quaeruntur causae, sic et in contingentibus."

16. "Dico hic contingens...cujus oppositum posset fieri quando istud fit" (*De Primo Principio*, c. 4; ed. by Evan Roche, O.F.M., St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1949, p. 84).

17. "Quia aliqua est contingens, igitur possibilis esse post non esse" (*ibid.*, c. 3, p. 37). Cf. A. Wolter, O.F.M., *The Transcendentals and Their Function*, pp. 150 ff.

18. Cf. E. Longpré, O.F.M., "St. Augustin et la pensée franciscaine" in *La France Franciscaine* XV (1932), p. 68; Wolter, "The 'Theologism' of Duns Scotus" in *Franciscan Studies* VII (1947), p. 370.



has willed to create these objects in preference to others, or why He created the world at this time rather than at another, would prove just as useless as to ask for the reason why God has given this human nature to this individual rather than to another, or why human nature is possible and contingent. The only reason why it is better for these things to be thus rather than otherwise is because God willed to act in this manner and not in another.<sup>19</sup> To inquire further is to search for reasons where there are no reasons:

Et ideo ista voluntas Dei, qua vult hoc et pro nunc, est immediata et prima causa, cujus non est aliqua alia causa quaerenda; sicut enim non est ratio quare voluit naturam humanam esse in hoc individuo, et esse possibile et contingens, ita non est ratio quare hoc voluit nunc et non tunc; sed tantum quia voluit hoc esse, ideo bonum fuit illud esse; et quaerere hujus propositionis, licet contingentis, immediate aliam rationem, est quaerere rationem cujus non est ratio quaerenda (*Oxon.* II, d. 1, q. 2, f. 98v, b; n. 9, XI, 65a).<sup>20</sup>

Just as it is impossible to establish a cause for the creative activity of the First Cause, so it is often impossible to find causes for certain activities of caused causes. Here as there we meet with immediate and indemonstrable causalities. Thus the proposition, "Heat produces heat," is an immediate proposition for which there is no demonstration or proof. Just as the question, "Why is heat capable of producing heat?" is equivalent to asking why heat is heat, so the question, "Why does heat produce heat?" admits of only one answer: "Because it is heat."

Sicut in necessariis est invenire propositiones immediatas quarum non quaeruntur causae, sic et in contingentibus. Unde haec est immediata: calor est calefactivus, et necessaria; et haec similiter immediata: calor calefacit, sed contingens. Quaerere igitur causam quare calor est calefactivus non est aliud nisi quaerere quare calor est calor.<sup>21</sup> Si quaeras

19. Cf. E. Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen âge*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1947), pp. 598f. While insisting on the important role assigned to Divine liberty in the system of Scotus, Gilson does not make the mistake to identify Scotus' liberty with the absolute indifferentism of Descartes, as so many "historians" have done in the past.

20. "Quando quaeritur quare voluntas divina est volitiva producere creaturas... certe non est alia causa nisi quia voluntas est voluntas" (*Rep. Exam.* I, d. 8, q. 7, f. 37v).

21. Et haec est causa quare est calefactivus, quia calor est calor *add. Merton College MS.* 59, 58v.

de ista: quare calor calefacit, dico similiter quod nihil est quare, quia calefacit eo quod calor est (*Rep. Exam.* I, d. 8, q. 2; f. 37v).<sup>22</sup>

The Commentary on Metaphysics places the ultimate reason for immediate contingent propositions in the fact that a non-contingent effect follows from a necessary cause. This can be seen in the following reasoning. A contingent proposition is either immediate or mediate. If it is immediate, then our contention that there is a first contingent proposition is established. If it is mediate, then we must look for a middle term by which the proposition is inferred from a premise which must also be contingent, for a contingent effect cannot follow from a necessary cause. Again, the premise is either mediate or immediate. If it is immediate our point is proved. If it is mediate, then it must have been derived from another contingent premise, which in turn is either immediate or mediate. And so on *in infinitum*, unless we stop at some first, immediate, and contingent proposition:

Ex necessariis non sequitur contingens. Patet: accipiaturs aliqua contingens; si est immediata habetur propositum; si non, detur medium; altera praemissa ad ipsam est contingens, alias ex necessariis inferitur contingens; ista praemissa contingens si est mediata, altera praemissa ad ipsam erit contingens, et sic in infinitum, nisi stet in aliqua contingente immediata (*Metaph.* IX, q. 15, n. 4; VII, 609b).

Scotus' intention in referring to the "orde in contingentibus" when speaking of self-evident psychological states seems to be no other than this. Just as there is no further reason for the fact that the will wills or that heat heats, etc., than that they are will or heat, so there is no reason for the fact that I am awake, or hearing, or seeing, than the actual existence in my soul or body of these acts or dispositions. As in external contingent experience the intellect must often content itself with simply ascertaining the facts as they present themselves, so in the sphere of inner experience we must be satisfied with ascertaining the dispositions as they are present in us. We cannot account for their being there, or for their being what they are.

Here it may be asked, Why does Scotus call these propositions self-evident, although they are essentially dependent on experience?

22. Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 7, n. 26; VIII, 562a-b.



Thus the proposition, "Ego vigilo," is obviously not self-evident in virtue of its terms. It can be known to a person who is actually in the state of waking; in other words, its evidence is essentially a result of actual experience.

It must be noted here that the expression, "per se," indicates a double function of the terms in a self-evident proposition. First, it refers to the self-evidence through the terms; a proposition is called "per se nota" inasmuch as it is knowable through the mutual relation of the terms as they stand in the proposition. Secondly, "per se" expresses the logical immediacy of a self-evident proposition; it indicates that no middle term is needed to make the proposition evident or knowable. This is obviously the case with the contingent propositions under consideration. Indeed, the only reason Scotus adduces *expressis verbis* for calling contingent propositions self-evident is their immediacy:

Nos vigilare est per se notum...quia...aliqua est prima et immediata (Oxon. I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, b; n. 10, IX, 179a).

Therefore, it is in the sense of immediacy that the expression, "per se," is applied to these propositions. Their evidence, therefore, cannot be placed on the same level with that of self-evident propositions in the strict sense. This would be incompatible with the very nature of contingent propositions. Known, as they are, by experience, they cannot be self-evident in virtue of the terms.<sup>23</sup> If Scotus nevertheless calls them self-evident it is because the intellect grasps them in the same immediate way as it grasps self-evident propositions.

From a subjective standpoint, the self-evidence of inner states and operations, such as to be awake, to be aware, to be thinking, etc., is even more basic than the self-evident principles themselves.<sup>24</sup> Not that the latter are in any way dependent on the knowing subject for their validity or trustworthiness; but their objective self-evidence would never become known unless it were

23. Cf. Aniceto de Mandonedo, O.F.M., "Abstraccion y realismo según el B.J.D. Escoto" in *Collectanea Franciscana*, VI (1936), pp. 548f.

24. Cf. Déodat de Basly, O.F.M., *Scotus docens* (Paris, 1934), p. 9: "Dans l'ordre de nos moyens de connaître, l'expérimentation *interne* occupe la toute première place."

first self-evidently known that we are subjectively disposed to apprehend them. The relation between the evidence of psychological states and first principles is further developed in Scotus' discussion of certain objections raised against the certitude of natural knowledge.

C. INTROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE IS AT THE BASIS  
OF ALL EVIDENCE

Henry of Ghent, impressed by the illusions to which man is exposed in dreams and hallucinations, had come to the conviction that no true knowledge whatsoever is possible without a special light from on high. No one, argues Henry, has a certain and infallible knowledge of truth unless he has the means by which to distinguish what is true from what is apparently true. Both in dreaming and waking, however, we make use of the same instruments of knowledge, viz., of images or species. In the former state these species appear to us as real objects, whereas in the latter we apprehend them as mere images or similitudes of objects. These two representations, as is obvious, cannot be true at the same time. Yet it is impossible to decide which is true and which false, since nothing seems to justify one to ascribe truth to what we perceive in one state in preference to what we perceive in another.<sup>25</sup>

Scotus is aware of the serious and far-reaching nature of the problem posed by Henry. For he, too, admits the activity of phantasy as indispensable for true knowledge. But contrary to Henry, he maintains that the intellect has at its disposal a reliable criterion of correctly evaluating the activity of phantasy. First, there is the following truth which "rests in the intellect" (*quiescens in intellectu*): "A disposed faculty does not err concerning the objects proportionate to it." Secondly, while actually understanding, the intellect knows self-evidently that it is awake;<sup>26</sup> hence, it also knows that the phantasy is not indisposed in waking as it is in dreaming:

Quomodo sciet vel erit tunc intellectus certus, quando non errat virtus phantastica, quam tamen non errare requiritur ad hoc quod intel-

25. *Supra*, pp. 23 ff.

26. Cf. *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 11; XX, 303b: "Naturale est quod in vigilia homo habeat usum rationis, in somno autem non."



lectus non erret? - Respondeo, ista veritas quiescit in intellectu, quod potentia non errat circa objectum proportionatum, nisi indisposita; et notum est intellectui virtutem phantasticam non esse indispositam in vigilia tali indispositione quae facit phantasma repraesentare se tamquam objectum, quia per se notum est intellectui quod intelligens vigilat (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 32r, b; n. 14, IX, 182b-183a).

In the state of waking, therefore, the phantasy does not function at random or haphazardly, but is under the control of the intellect. Moreover, in this state we are conscious not only of the control exercised by the intellect here and now, but also of the fact that it had no control over the phantasy in the state of sleep. Hence, man is not necessarily led into error, for there is a state in which he can both judge the actual operations of his phantasy and intellect, and exclude as not trustworthy the representations and operations of unconscious and abnormal states.

As for those who stubbornly refuse to admit any immediate certitude in the domain of introspection and sense perceptions, there is no hope of convincing them of anything whatsoever. Aristotle<sup>27</sup> takes recourse to arguments *ad hominem* against those who deny the principle of contradiction, by showing the inconsistencies into which they have fallen. Likewise, we have only one means to discard the objections of those who deny introspective evidence: to show them how inconsistently they act. On the one hand, they do not admit that any disposition or operation of the soul is known with certainty. On the other hand, they do not act accordingly. For waking from a dream in which they imagined that they were about to possess something, they do not pursue it, as they would do in waking if a thing were thus close by.<sup>28</sup> By acting in this manner they implicitly admit that it can be known whether a faculty is disposed or not; otherwise there would be no reason for not pursuing the thing seen in dreams.

It is useless to argue with those who demand further extrinsic or intrinsic criteria to decide whether we are now awake or asleep.

27. *Metaphysics* III (*alias* IV), chaps. 4 ff.

28. *Loc. cit.*, chap. 5; 1010b 3-10: "It is fair to express surprise at our opponents' raising the question..whether...those things (are) true which appear to the sleeping or to the waking. For obviously they do not think these to be open questions; no one, at least, if when he is in Libya he has fancied one night that he is in Athens, starts for the concert hall."

To these we shall say: "You cannot be convinced of anything, because you do not want to be convinced." There are no reasons against bad will. "To doubt the value of this intuitive evidence" (of introspection), comments Bettoni,<sup>29</sup> is to render impossible all affirmation and all reasoning. It is a doubt from which there is no escape. And it is precisely this impossibility of escape which reveals the absolute gratuitousness of such a doubt."

Contra negantem primum principium...Philosophus...inducit alia inconvenientia manifestiora...Ita hic, si contendis nullam propositionem esse per se notam, nolo disputare tecum, quia constat quod protervis et non es persuasus, sicut patet in actibus tuis, quomodo objicit Philosophus IV *Metaph.* Somnians enim de aliquo quasi in proximo consequendo sive obtinendo, et postea evigilans, non persequeris illud, sicut prosequeris vel prosequeris si ita esses proximus in vigilando ad illud consequendum (*loc. cit.*, 183a-b).<sup>30</sup>

Entirely different is Aristotle's procedure with those who admit the first principles. True, he does not pretend to prove the principles, because they are indemonstrable. But he makes it clear that they are known in such evident manner that their opposites are simply inconceivable.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, there is no cogent proof for a *per se notum* in the sphere of human operations. Yet we are in a position to verify how such knowledge comes about, and how the denial of its self-evidence implies contradictions and incongruities. Thus, if you reject introspective evidence, you must logically reject all self-evident propositions. And conversely, if you grant that there is a self-evident proposition you must also concede that we can know with certainty when the faculties are disposed and when they are not. An indisposed faculty can err with regard to anything, not excepting the first principles themselves, as we know from dreams. Therefore, in order that a proposition be known *per se* or self-evidently, it is first necessary that we be able to know immediately and evidently when our intellectual faculty works

29. *Duns Scoti* (Brescia, 1945), p. 171.

30. Cf. *Oxon.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, n. 6; XX, 37b ss.; *Rep. Par.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, n. 7; XXIV, 490b ss.

31. Aristotle admits that someone may affirm and deny the same thing *in words*, but no one in his right mind can *think* contradictory statements true, "for what a man says, he does not necessarily believe." *Loc. cit.*, chap. 3, 1005b 23-26. - Cf. also: *Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 2, n. 31; VIII, 478b.



normally and when not.<sup>32</sup> In other words, you must admit that it can be known through our own internal operations that the faculty is actually disposed. Otherwise it would be impossible to ascertain whether a proposition which appears to us as self-evident is in fact self-evident:

Recipientibus primum principium (Aristoteles) ostendit quomodo sit notum, ita quod oppositum ejus non possit evenire in mentem...Si admittis aliquam propositionem esse per se notam<sup>33</sup> et circa quamcumque potest potentia indisposita errare, sicut patet in somniis; ergo ad hoc ut aliqua cognoscatur per se esse nota, oportet quod possit cognosci quando potentia est disposita et quando non. Et per consequens potest haberi notitia de actibus nostris, quod potentia est ita disposita quod illa est per se nota quae apparet sibi per se nota (*loc. cit.*, 183b).

Similar is Scotus' solution of the difficulty raised against the possibility of distinguishing between real and imaginary sense perceptions. It is said that in dreams it often seems to us that we are having real sense perceptions. Hence, no certainty is possible concerning the reliability of any sense perception. For if we cannot distinguish between the value of the perceptions of the states of waking and dreaming, then no sense perception can be trusted.

In answering this objection, Scotus again concedes, at least implicitly, that there is no proof for such an immediate and primary activity as is sense perception. As before, he takes recourse to an argument *ad hominem*, by pointing out the absurdities which result from the sceptical attitude of his opponent. No illusions occurring in dreams can render a principle less self-evident. Likewise, no illusion in the senses can prevent a hearing or seeing person from knowing evidently that he is actually hearing or seeing. Although an indisposed intellectual faculty may err with regard to either first principles or sense perceptions, a disposed faculty does not. But when it is disposed, and when not, this is known of itself. Otherwise it could not be determined that any other proposition is self-evident. For it would be impossible to decide which proposition should be considered self-evident, whether that to which the

32. "And when not" does not indicate that we can know the indisposition of the faculty at the time of its indisposition. But we become aware of the error as soon as we are restored to the normal use of the faculty.

33. Oportet quod possit cognosci *add. Viv.*

intellect assents in the state of waking or in the state of dreaming:<sup>34</sup>

Dico ad formam illius cavillationis, quodsi sicut apparet somnianti se videre, ita posset sibi apparere oppositum unius principii per se noti speculabilis; et tamen non sequitur quin illud principium sit per se notum. Et ita non sequitur quin sit per se notum audienti quod audiat, quia circa utrumque potest potentia indisposita errare, non autem disposita. Et quando sit disposita, et quando non, hoc est per se notum. Alias non posset cognosci aliam aliquam esse per se notam, quia non posset cognosci quae foret per se nota, utrum illa cui intellectus sic dispositus, vel cui sic, assentiret (*ibid.*).

Nothing could express more poignantly the great importance Scotus attaches to introspective evidence than the concluding sentence of this text. It may be said that the immediate evidence of the disposition of our cognitive faculties is so basic that its rejection implies the downfall of all knowledge. This primary evidence cannot be denied without at the same time rendering impossible any meaningful statement. As Mandonedo<sup>35</sup> remarks, even those who doubt the speculative principles presuppose, at least implicitly, the certainty of the act by which this doubt is known. To be consequent with themselves, those who reject introspective evidence should refrain from stating anything, not excluding their doubts. Scotus' argumentation may be summed up in the following alternative: Either you do not admit of self-evident principles, and then it is useless to argue with you; or you admit that we can and do know self-evident principles, and then you cannot help granting that we can also know whether our faculties are disposed or not.

Having carefully followed our Doctor's expositions on introspective evidence, we are now in a position to comprehend his reasons for stressing so strongly the fact of self-consciousness. It is because the knowledge of our own acts is "the most certain knowledge of all and the foundation of all certitude."<sup>36</sup> While

34. Cf. Bettoni, *op. cit.*, p. 170: "Non c'è altra garanzia (della validità oggettiva de'miei ragionamenti) che quella della mia coscienza, coscienza che non è altro che l'intuizione dei miei atti. Sebbene io, in sogno, possa fare gli stessi ragionamenti di quando sono sveglio, tuttavia distinguo benissimo fra ciò che ho pensato in sogno e ciò che penso da sveglio. Insomma i miei atti e la bona disposizione o meno della mia facoltà intelletiva mi è nota intuitivamente, e contro questa evidenza e certezza intuitiva non c'è cavillo che valga."

35. *Loc. cit.*, p. 17.

36. C.R.S. Harris, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford, 1927), vol. II, p. 26.



rejecting Augustinian illuminationism, Scotus is broad-minded enough to adopt St. Augustine's views on introspection and thus to supply the Aristotelian doctrine on natural certitude with a firm foundation in the eminent sense of reality proper to the great bishop of Hippo. With Bettoni<sup>37</sup> we must recognize that "it was certainly not from Aristotle that Duns Scotus has learned to appreciate intuitive cognition in general, and to attribute to the intuition of our acts in particular the great importance which we have just given consideration. All this is Augustinian heritage, emerging victoriously from under Aristotelian problematics and formulas. While adopting the latter, Duns Scotus has reserved for himself the liberty to integrate and melt them with the teachings of St. Augustine."

37. *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FUNCTION OF EVIDENCE IN INDUCTION

#### A. NATURE OF INDUCTIVE REASONING

Induction<sup>1</sup> is an intellectual procedure which attempts to solve the acute question of universally valid conclusions in the sphere of experimental sciences. The problem underlying the inductive process may be formulated thus. It is possible to conclude to a uniformity of operations in natural agents on the basis of a limited number of particular observations or experiments?

This problem was by no means unfamiliar to the Scholastics. Aristotle himself had given considerable thought to the validity of inductive reasoning and to the conditions which regulate it.

Although Scotus does not mention Aristotle's theory of induction, it is not without interest to establish a brief comparison between Scotus' and Aristotle's conception of this method of knowledge.

#### 1. *Aristotelian and Scotistic Induction*

For Aristotle the only legitimate way of concluding to universal propositions by means of experience is that which proceeds through the enumeration of all particular cases. Thus we can conclude to the longevity of certain animals by the fact that they are bileless, in the following manner: Man, the horse, etc., are long-lived; man, the horse, etc., are bileless; therefore, animals which are bileless are long-lived.

This procedure, however, as Zeller<sup>2</sup> points out, applies only when the minor concept ("animals which are bileless") has an

1. Let it be noted at once that Scotus does not use the term "induction" in the modern sense of the word. Instead he uses the terms "experientia," "cognitio experimentalis," and the like. G.H. Joyce, S.J., in his *Principles of Logic* (London, 1908), pp. 232 f. remarks that the reason why modern textbooks generally state that Scholastic philosophers knew of no inductive process lies "in the fact that the most famous of the Scholastics do not employ the term Induction as the distinctive name of the inference by which we establish universal laws of nature." For the different usages of the term in the Scholastics vide: Hans Meyer, *Thomas von Aquin* (Bonn, 1938), pp. 47f.

2. *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics* (London, 1897), vol. I, pp. 242 ff.



equal extension with the middle concept ("man, horse, etc."), and when the minor proposition ("Man, the horse, etc., are bileless") can be simply transposed, so that in its place this proposition, "The animals which are bileless are man, the horse, etc.," can be put. In other words, the middle term must comprise all the particulars, "for Induction proceeds through an enumeration of all the cases."<sup>3</sup>

This procedure, it is generally admitted,<sup>4</sup> shows serious defects and omissions and can therefore be considered as being practically useless as an instrument of new knowledge. If all particular cases have to be ascertained before we can conclude to all cases in general, it follows that induction for the most part adds only to the intensity of knowledge, but never to its extension. Zeller<sup>5</sup> indicates the main weakness of this "perfect induction" by calling attention to the fact that it is never permissible to conclude to a universal proposition from all the cases *known to us*. For who can ever be sure of having exhausted all the particular cases in matters of experience? Hence, if we were to accept Aristotle's rule of induction, we would never be justified in drawing an inference reaching further than the cases actually known to us. In order to really advance the extension of knowledge, the problem of induction must be approached from a different angle. As a first step we must examine whether from all the cases known to us we may establish a law which will apply to all similar cases.<sup>6</sup> That is how Scotus formulates the problem of the validity of induction. We shall see that his solution is not unlike that which is generally considered as one of the achievements of modern science. First, let us quote Scotus' text:

3. *Prior Analytics* II, c. 23; 68b 11-36.

4. P. Raymond, O.F.M. Cap., "La Théorie de l'Induction - Duns Scot précurseur de Bacon" in *Etudes Franciscaines* XXI (1909), p. 121: "C'est donc à sa nature même: *locus a partibus totius in quantitate ad suum totum*, que tient l'impuissance scientifique de cette forme de raisonnement." According to Raymond, the complete induction of Aristotle has but a provisional value, since new cases must be constantly reckoned with.

5. *Op. cit.*, p. 258.

6. Cf. A. de Mandoñedo, O.F.M. Cap., "Abstracción y realismo según el B.J.D. Escoto" in *Collectanea Franciscana*, VI (1936), pp. 548 f.

De cognitis per experientiam dico quod licet experientia non habeatur de omnibus singularibus, sed de pluribus, neque quod semper, sed quod pluries, tamen expertus infallibiliter novit quod ita est et semper et in omnibus, et hoc per istam propositionem quiescentem in anima: quidquid evenit ut in pluribus ab aliqua causa non libera est effectus naturalis illius causae, quae propositio nota est intellectui, licet accepisset terminos ejus a sensu errante (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, a-b; n. 9, IX, 176a-b).

In modern terminology the gist of this text might be worded thus: Does the scientist who has observed a certain phenomenon in a limited number of cases have the right to conclude that the same phenomenon will always occur in connection with the same cause? Scotus answers: If repeated experience reveals a constant reaction on the part of a natural agent, then we can conclude with infallible certitude, first, that the observed effect is proper to that particular agent here and now (*quod ita est*), and secondly, that the same agent will always and everywhere (*semper et in omnibus*) produce the same effect. These conclusions are justified through the following proposition "which rests in the mind:" The effect which frequently follows a non-free cause is a natural effect of that cause. This proposition is self-evident in the sense of the first principles. Its validity and truth do not depend on the trustworthiness of any sense perception. All the mind needs in order to be absolutely certain of this proposition is to consider the relation of a non-free cause on the one hand, to the concept of a constant effect on the other.

As Raymond<sup>7</sup> observes, "it would be unreasonable to assume that a non-free cause should produce ordinarily a phenomenon which is strictly specified, and in conditions which are not less strictly specified, unless it be irresistibly compelled to such an effect in virtue of an inner final principle." We may find external final causes which account for the uniform activity of free agents. But we cannot discover any external causes which would account satisfactorily for the uniformity of reactions in natural agents. A uniform and constant effect in a non-free agent must be ascribed to the natural constitution itself of the agent.

7. *Loc. cit.*, p. 274.



2. *Exclusion of Chance-Causality*

It is sometimes suggested that the effects observed in nature are to be attributed to a casual concurrence of a greater or lesser number of agents, and not to any particular and unchangeable agent. Although not ordered to each other in virtue of their natures, the said agents happen to produce certain effects through an accidental association of their particular activities.<sup>8</sup>

According to Scotus, such fortuitous concurrences of non-ordered agents cannot explain the uniformity of effects in nature. For the agents which here and now are said to act as chance-causes are normally ordered to the very opposite of the effect they now produce accidentally; or at least to some other effect, different from the one they produce here and now. Chance-causality, in fact, always implies the concept of the unusual and extraordinary. It is obviously absurd that a series of non-free agents as these chance-causes are, should produce *in pluribus*, i.e., frequently and under varying circumstances, a constant and uniform effect:

Causa non libera non potest producere ut in pluribus effectum non liberae ad cuius oppositum ordinatur, vel ad quam ex sua forma non ordinatur. Sed causa casualis ordinatur ad producendum oppositum effectus casualis, vel non ad istum producendum; ergo nihil est causa casualis respectu<sup>9</sup> effectus frequenter producti ab eo, et ita si non sit libera, erit causa naturalis. Iste autem effectus evenit a tali causa etc.; ergo illud est causa naturalis effectus frequenter producti ab eo, quia non est casualis; iste enim effectus evenit a tali causa ut in pluribus<sup>10</sup> (*loc. cit.*, 176b).

It is clear, then, that no effect frequently found in connection with a particular agent is attributable to chance. Scotus, of course, does not deny the possibility of exceptions in nature.<sup>11</sup> Exceptional occurrences, however, do not invalidate the method of induction. For they cannot shake our certitude of the principle of induction which remains self-evident and true. Exceptions, however, serve to show the occasional inapplicability of the method, and to render the observer more cautious in attributing a particular effect to a

8. For an exhaustive description of chance-causality see: *Metaph.* VI, q. 2; VII, pp. 323b ss.: "Utrum de ente per accidens possit esse scientia?"

9. Respectu *add. Viv.*

10. Iste autem.../ *om. Viv.*

11. *Metaph.* VI, q. 2, *passim*; VII, 323b ss.

particular cause. We shall elaborate upon this point in a later paragraph of this chapter.

### 3. *Application of the Inductive Method*

We have seen that the principle of induction is evident through its terms. The occurrence of a frequent effect in natural agents, however, must be learned from experience. By observing a natural agent we often discover that at one time it is accompanied by this accident, at another by that other accident. If the agent, despite the varying accidents, produces constantly and invariably the same effect, then we must conclude that this effect is not the result of the changing accidents but of the underlying permanent nature of the agent:

Effectus evenit a tali causa ut in pluribus, hoc acceptum est per experientiam; quia inveniendū nunc talem naturam cum tali accidente, nunc cum tali, inventum est quod quantacumque esset diversitas accidentium talium, semper istam naturam sequebatur talis effectus; ergo non per aliquod accidens istius naturae, sed per naturam ipsam in se sequitur talis effectus (*ibid.*).

It is not without interest to point out the similarity of Scotus' position and solution of the problem of induction, with that adopted in our day. It has often been said that scientific induction was entirely unknown to the Scholastics. Even among Catholic authors this view still prevails to a great extent. In one of Brunner's recent works<sup>12</sup> we read that "scientific induction was unknown to the Scholastics," and that "with the discovery of the inductive scientific methods the problem of the value of their results was raised for the first time." The Scholastics are said to have confused the evident principles "with the abstract and hypothetically necessary formulas of the general laws of nature." "It is commonly stated in English textbooks of Logic," writes Joyce,<sup>13</sup> "that the Scholastic philosophers knew of no inductive process save Perfect and Imperfect Induction, and that they believed that our certainty as to the laws of nature was based on mere enumeration...." And he goes on to criticize this erroneous opinion: "It may indeed be owned that the subject of Induction received far less attention from the

12. Auguste Brunner, S.J., *La connaissance humaine* (Paris, 1943), pp. 289f.

13. G.H. Joyce, S.J., *Principles of Logic* (London, 1908), pp. 232f.



medieval writers than it merits. Yet to say that they believed our knowledge as to the laws of nature, to rest on a process of Imperfect Induction by mere enumeration, argues a remarkable want of acquaintance with their writings.... The more prominent amongst them base our certainty in regard to natural laws on the principle, that when the operation of some natural agent produces regularly and habitually some particular result, this result is not due to an accidental circumstance, but is an effect having for its cause the specific nature of the agent." Coffey<sup>14</sup> shows that already St. Thomas made use of the method of agreement, although he "does not explicitly state the principle (of induction), or examine the process by which the ascent is made." Both Joyce and Coffey give full credit to Scotus for having analyzed "with a good deal of precision the procedure by which the generalization is effected."<sup>15</sup> The principle by which Scotus proceeds from particular effects to a universal law is essentially identical to the so-called *law of concatenation* (*Verknuepfungsgesetz*) which, according to modern logicians, lies at the basis of the inductive method of agreement.<sup>16</sup>

Yet, as we shall presently see, Scotus carefully avoids attributing an exaggerated grade of certitude to the inductive method. He constantly keeps in mind that inductive reasoning is made up of two elements or essentially different values, viz., of a necessary element on the one hand, and a contingent element on the other. The necessary factor is the self-evident principle of induction. The contingent element is the actual instance or series of instances in which a specific effect is observed. Instead of hastily concluding to an absolute degree of certitude from repeated experience, Scotus constantly distinguishes between the absolute truth and certainty of the self-evident principle and the relative value of the laws of nature. He knows well that from two premises, one of which is absolutely certain, and the other only relatively so, no absolutely

14. *The Science of Logic* (London, 1912), vol. II, pp. 34f.

15. Professor J. Maritain, in his *Formal Logic* (New York, 1946), pp. 282 f., states that among the Scholastics the theory of incomplete induction was treated particularly by Albert the Great and John of St. Thomas. Curiously enough, the illustrious author does not even mention the name of Scotus.

16. Messner, *op. cit.*, pp. 294 f.; Bettoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 168f.

certain conclusion follows. Hence his painstaking efforts to determine the true grade of certitude proper to the inductive process.

## B. CERTITUDE OF INDUCTION

### 1. *The Basis of Inductive Certitude*

As is implicit in the above expositions, the validity and applicability of the inductive process presuppose the uniformity of nature and its operations. This is an assumption which lies at the basis of natural science as a whole. To reject it is tantamount to renouncing all certitude in this realm.<sup>17</sup> The Schoolmen used to express this postulate in the formula, "Natura determinatur ad unum." This expression, Scotus tells us, is not to be understood in the sense that nature is limited to the production of only one singular effect, but in the sense that nature is directed to one determined manner or pattern of production. By this mode of activity natural agents differ from free agents which determine themselves freely to one or the other of two opposite objects or actions:

Est intellectus hujus propositionis: natura determinatur ad unum, non quidem ad unum producibile, unum inquam numero sive singulare; sed determinatur ad unum determinatum modum producendi, quia non est ibi principium indeterminatum respectu oppositorum sicut est voluntas. (*Quodl.* q. 2, n. 10; XXV, 71a).

It is from this uniformity of nature that induction, which concludes from several past effects to the repetition of the same effects in the future, draws its certitude. As Raymond<sup>18</sup> observes, the principle of induction itself, i.e., "quidquid evenit ut in pluribus ab aliqua causa non libera, est effectus naturalis illius causae," presupposes this belief in the uniformity of nature. This concept of nature is part of the Aristotelian heritage. Since nature is the ultimate source of being and the first principle of all its operations, it is only logical to see in the immutability of its causal determination the reason for the constancy and invariability (*fixité*) ob-

17. Messner, *op. cit.*, p. 298 f.: "Voraussetzung aller Induktion und aller Wirklichkeitswissenschaft bleibt immer, dass man an eine objektive *Weltordnung* glaube. Wo das Vertrauen auf diese verloren geht, dort muss auch das Vertrauen erliegen, allgemeine Gesetze aufzufinden; der Gedanke der allgemeinen Weltordnung muss der Leitstern jeder Wissenschaft bilden."

18. *Loc. cit.*, p. 274.



served in the production of a phenomenon and its accompanying modalities. Yet, contrary to certain modern philosophers, Scotus does not base inductive certitude on a blind or instinctive belief in the constancy of physical laws (Scotch School), or in some *a priori* forms of causality and finality (Lachelier); rather he traces it back to repeated observation of the operations of nature.<sup>19</sup> It is the evidence of experience which tells us that nature acts uniformly and orderly:

Expertus...certitudinaliter sine demonstratione cognosceret quia...  
videt et certus est naturam ut in pluribus uniformiter agere et ordinate  
(*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 19; VII, 62a).<sup>20</sup>

It might be asked, Is the constancy of nature so firmly established as not to admit of any exception whatever? Does the fact that hitherto nature has acted in this manner give the scientist a guarantee that it will invariably, and infallibly, and always act in the same way? Will no interference of any kind be able to cause it to deflect from its regular course? No Christian thinker can give an affirmative answer to these questions. The radical contingency or, in other words, the essential dependence of the world on its Creator and Conserver prevents him from ascribing an absolute invariability to the laws of nature. This is also Scotus' position. He maintains that those agents which produce their effects in virtue of their form or essence do this in a necessary manner. Yet he adds that this necessity is conditional (*secundum quid*), i.e., the effect occurs only if the natural agent in question is left to itself. In other words, he leaves room for exceptions through the intervention of the First Cause which acts contingently or freely, and may therefore prevent the natural agent from producing its normal effect:

Licet aliqua connexio (effectus ad causam) sit secundum quid necessaria, nulla tamen simpliciter est necessaria, quia quaelibet dependet

19. Idem, *ibid.*, p. 274.

20. In this Scotus employs the same criterion used by Stuart Mill and his followers. "D'autres," writes Raymond (*ibid.*), "à la suite de Stuart Mill, expliquent l'origine de cette croyance (à la constance des lois physiques) par la répétition des constatations expérimentales." Cf. also: *Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 17; VII, 60b-61a: "Ex multis singularibus cum hac propositione, natura agit ut in pluribus, nisi impediatur, sequitur universalis; et si non sit causa impedibilis, sequitur simpliciter quod in omnibus."

a prima causa quae contingenter causat...similiter communiter secundae causae sunt impedibiles, et causa impedibilis quantumcumque non impediatur non est necessaria (*Metaph.* V, q. 3, n. 5; VII, 206a).

Physical laws, therefore, are not absolutely but conditionally necessary.<sup>21</sup> The course of nature is predictable only on the condition that it be left to itself, and not interfered with by Divine Omnipotence:

Ad intentionem Aristotelis<sup>22</sup>...an scilicet sicut scibile est pluviam fore sub Capricorno, per causam naturalem ordinatam ad ejus eventum, tamen impedibilem, ita etiam scibile sit pluviam fore sub Cane; *et hoc supposito, quod causae naturales sibi dimittantur*, scilicet quod *per virtutem divinam non impediuntur*, quam suppositionem Aristoteles putavit necessariam (*Metaph.* VI, q. 2, n. 7; VII, 329a).

As Longpré<sup>23</sup> points out, the Divine Legislator is not bound by the laws He has freely established, which means that the laws of nature are always liable to be suspended.

Apart from the possibility of direct intervention on the part of the Creator, the scientist must also reckon with the so-called chance causes<sup>24</sup> or *causae per accidens*, as Scotus calls them.<sup>25</sup> Natural causes which normally produce their effects in a necessary manner (*per se*) may sometimes be impeded in their normal operations by the interference of certain extrinsic factors:

Causa naturalis, licet ex se terminetur ad effectum, potest tamen impedi...si ab extrinseco ponatur impedimentum (*Metaph.* IX, q. 14, n. 10; VII, 589a).<sup>26</sup>

21. Cf. William of Ockham's clear formulation of this hypothetical necessity: "De contingentibus formantur propositiones necessariae hypotheticae, scilicet conditionales vel temporales." *Sent. prol.*, q. 4, K; we are quoting from E. Hochstetter, *Studien zur Metaphysik u. Erkenntnislehre W. v. Ockham* (Berlin, 1927), p. 168, note 1.

22. *Metaphysics*, V, c. 2; 1026b 33-36.

23. *La philosophie du Bienheureux Duns Scot* (Paris, 1924), p. 64. Vide also: E. Gilson, *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (Paris, 1944), p. 359.

24. We say "so-called chance causes" because Scotus admits of no chance effects in the strict sense. True, an effect *per accidens* is not knowable through the cause to which it is related accidentally. Absolutely speaking, however, any accidental effect can be traced back to a cause *per se* (*Metaph.* VI, q. 2, n. 7; VII, 329b). We usually try to conceal our inability to perform the mentioned operation by speaking of "chance causes."

25. *Metaph.* VI, q. 2, *passim*; VII, 323b ss.

26. Cf. *Oxon.* II, d. 7, q. un., n. 26; XII, 407a; *Metaph.* VI, q. 2, n. 7; VII, 330a.



Yet, despite the occasional occurrence of such impediments, Scotus does not doubt the value of the inductive process. Although the possibility of exceptions in nature should caution the observer against placing an exaggerated confidence in the method, it can be stated that induction is a sure way of arriving at certain knowledge. As is implied in the texts, the mentioned interference of extrinsic factors always remains the exception. As a rule, nature acts in a necessary and uniform manner. "A natural cause," writes Scotus, "produces its effect to the utmost of its power as often as it is not prevented from doing so:"

*Causa naturalis agit ad effectum suum secundum ultimum potentiae suae quando non est impedita (Oxon. I, d. 3, q. 2, f. 27r, b; n. 23, IX, 48b).<sup>27</sup>*

Every natural cause, if left to itself, produces its proper effect:

*Omnis causa sibi dimissa...producit effectum cuius est per se (Metaph. VI, q. 2, n. 7; VII, 329a).*

In other words, natural causes produce necessarily all that they are capable of producing, due to their strict determinism.<sup>28</sup> Therefore it is legitimate to infer: If fire is given, then light is also given. For the inference is based on a natural, non impeded causality:

*Dico quod sequitur: ignis est in hoc nunc et non impeditus, ergo lux est: locus est a causa naturaliter causante et non impedita; et non solum hoc, sed etiam a ratione quadam communiore in antecedente potest ista consequentia tenere, scilicet a ratione producentis naturaliter, et non impediti (Oxon. II, d. 1, q. 3, f. 99v, a; n. 11, XI, 76a).*

Thus, to the principle already mentioned that "the effect which proceeds for the most part from a non-free cause is a natural effect of this cause" another self-evident principle may be added: "Every natural cause, if not impeded, produces its effect necessarily." The latter principle contains the formal reason which justifies a universal conclusion from a limited number of observations.

27. Cf. *Oxon.* II, d. 2, q. 8, n. 13; XII, 195a; IV, d. 43, d. 3, n. 5; XX, 68a; *Metaph.* I, q. 7, n. 2; VII, 79b; IX, q. 14, n. 10, VII, 589a.

28. S. Belmond, O.F.M., "L'idée de création d'après S. Bonaventure et Duns Scot" in *Etudes Franciscaines*, XXXI (1914), pp. 10 ff.

2. *Grades of Inductive Certitude*

Having established the basic principles of induction and their certitude, we must now try to ascertain the various grades of certitude which may be had in the actual application of the method.

Induction concerns itself for the most part, if not exclusively, with reactions, effects, and properties, which are by their nature accidental to the agents in which they occur. Every accident, however, is absolutely speaking, separable from its subject. For the definition of an accident implies that it is not necessarily connected with the substance of the subject in which it inheres. Hence, from the presence of the subject we cannot conclude with absolute certainty to the presence of the accident. According to Scotus, it is never contradictory to say that the prior can be without the posterior:<sup>29</sup> "The prior according to nature and essence," he writes, "is that which is able to exist without the posterior, but not conversely. I take this in the following sense: Even if the prior necessarily causes the posterior and therefore cannot exist without it, still this is not because it needs the posterior for its own being, but conversely. For if it be assumed that the posterior does not exist, the prior will nevertheless exist without the inclusion of a contradiction."<sup>30</sup> In this sense all accidents are posterior to the substance, for they depend on substance for their existence, while substance does not depend on anyone of its accidents.

Moreover, "to be able to produce an absolutely necessary effect does not pertain to the perfection of a created cause; in fact, there is no such thing (as a necessary effect) in a created cause...for (the concept of) an absolutely necessary causation includes a contradiction."<sup>31</sup> Hence, while the self-evident principle, "A

29. Cf. Messner, *op.cit.*, p. 251.

30. *De Primo Principio*, c. 1, prima divisio; ed. by Evan Roche, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, 1949), p. 4 f.: "Prius secundum naturam et essentiam est, quod contingit esse sine posteriori, non e converso. Quod ita intelligo, quod, licet prius necessario causet posteriori et ideo sine ipso esse non possit, hoc tamen non est quia ad esse suum eget posteriori, sed e converso; quia si ponatur posteriori non esse, nihilominus prius erit sine inclusione contradictionis."

31. *Oxon.* II, d. 1, q. 3, n. 12; XI, 77b-78a: "Posse habere causatum simpliciter necessarium non est perfectionis in causa secunda; immo et hoc nulli causae secundae convenit...Simpliciter enim necessario causare includit contradictionem et ideo hoc nulli causae secundae convenit." Cf. *Oxon.* I, d. 8, q. 5, n. 25; IX,



frequent effect of a non-free cause must be ascribed to the nature of the cause," has an absolute and unshakeable validity, the same cannot be said of the reverse of that principle, viz., of this proposition: "As often as this cause is posited, its proper effect must also be posited." The contingency of secondary causes and of their effects does not allow this conclusion. No contingent thing, therefore, can enable the observer to conclude demonstratively to the existence of another contingent thing or to an accidental modification of it.

True, repeated observation may lead the scientist to the knowledge that a certain herb is "warm." But he will never discover a self-evident principle or a middle term by which the mentioned quality could be demonstrated in a necessary manner (*propter quid*) of the herb. This is equivalent to saying that no infallible knowledge can be had of the *actual presence* of warmth in a given herb. For it is not incompatible with the nature of an accidental quality to be separated from its subject. The only infallible knowledge the inductive process conveys is that the herb is *capable* of producing warmth. It is for this reason that the knowledge resulting from the application of the inductive process is termed by Scotus the lowest degree of scientific knowledge:

Quandoque est experientia de principio, ita quod non contingit per viam divisionis invenire ulterius principium ex terminis, sed statur in aliquo vero ut in pluribus, cujus extrema per experientiam scitum est frequenter uniri, puta quod haec herba talis speciei est calida, nec invenitur medium aliud prius per quod demonstretur passio de subjecto propter quid, sed statur in isto sicut primo noto propter experientiam. Licet tunc incertitudo et fallibilitas removeantur per istam propositionem, effectus ut in pluribus alicujus causae non liberae est naturalis effectus ejus, tamen iste est ultimus gradus cognitionis scientificae, et forte ibi non habetur cognitio actualis unionis extremorum, sed aptitudinalis; si enim passio est alia res absoluta a subjecto, posset sine contradictione separari a subjecto, et expertus non haberet cognitionem quia ita est, sed quia ita aptum natum est esse (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, b; n. 9, IX, 177a).

In the commentary on *Metaphysics* we find a more detailed description of the grade of certitude proper to the various steps of

765a: "Necessitas repugnat omni respectui ad posterius, quia ex quo omne posterius est non necessarium, primum non potest habere necessariam habitudinem ad aliquod eorum."

the inductive process. Scotus again points out that demonstrative cognition is denied the *expertus* or scientist. Yet by means of experience (*sciens quia est*), the natural scientist can know *with certainty* the cause of an observed effect, for he sees that nature, as a rule, acts uniformly and orderly:

Expertus demonstratione carens, sciens quia est, certitudinaliter, sine demonstratione cognosceret, quia videt et certus est naturam, ut in pluribus, uniformiter agere et ordinate (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 19; VII, 62a).

There is no doubt that this first step of inductive reasoning produces certitude. For it is based on a twofold evidence, viz., on the evidence of the experienced effects (*quia videt*), and on the self-evidence of the principle formulated at the occasion of this experience (*natura ut in pluribus...*).

A lesser degree of certitude is ascribed to the second step of the process which concludes from one or more particular effects of a natural agent to a similar effect in all the agents of the same kind. Experimental knowledge, however frequent, does not justify the inference that the observed effect will be necessarily the same in all cases. Experience yields only *probable* knowledge:

Experimentalis cognitio quantumcumque frequens, non infert necessario ita esse in omnibus, sed tantum probabiliter (*loc. cit.*, n. 6; 55a).

This need not be in contradiction with the *infallible* knowledge of the *Oxoniense*. For, as we have already remarked, the infallibility in that passage refers only to the *aptitude* of a given agent to produce the same effect in all cases, and not to the actual production of the effect.

Scotus' statement that induction produces only probable knowledge does not imply a positive denial of certitude. This is made clear in the following paragraph. The observation of many singular facts enables the observer to conclude, *per simile*, that the effect which was produced in many particular instances by a certain agent will also be produced in all similar cases. This inference is not based on a merely external or superficial likeness, such as are the elements which change with every case, but on the very essence or common nature of the agents in question:



Expertus per singularia arguit per simile, quod sicut est de uno singulari, et de pluribus, sicut est in multis singularibus, sic est in omnibus. Quod autem simile sit de uno singulari et de aliis, idem accipitur, quod subjectum comparatur ad praedicatum, non secundum accidens, nec secundum illud in quo differt ab alio singulari, sed per se et secundum naturam sui communis (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 6; VII, 55a).

The observer, therefore, concludes to absent and future cases, not simply on the evidence of sense perception, but on the evidence of an intellectual principle that is always true, viz., on the evidence of the proposition, "Nature, for the most part, acts uniformly and orderly."<sup>32</sup> On the basis of these considerations we may safely conclude that Scotus' *probability* is the equivalent of what we would term *physical certitude* which is based on exactly the same uniformity and constancy of the ordinary course of nature.

It might be asked why a twofold evidence as is present in the inductive process is not capable of producing a strictly scientific conclusion. We answer that in order to obtain such a conclusion the conclusion would have to be both evident and necessary. These conditions, however, are not fulfilled. First, the conclusion from a limited number of cases to all similar cases is not truly evident. For induction always deals with contingent facts, i.e., with conclusions from one contingent fact or series of facts to another contingent fact or series of facts. Contingent facts, however, cannot be evidently known unless they are actually existent and present to the knower. It lies in the very nature of induction that the facts to which it concludes are either absent or not yet in existence. An inductive conclusion, therefore, cannot be evident.

Secondly, it is clear that a conclusion known in this manner is never necessary. For induction is essentially a mixed method of cognition. Besides an analytical, self-evident factor, it always contains a purely synthetical factor, viz., the fact or series of facts to which the self-evident principle is applied. The experimental factor, although evident, is always of a contingent nature. From two premises, however, one of which is contingent and the other necessary, only a contingent conclusion can follow:

32. *Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 19; VII, 62a: "Expertus...certus est naturam, ut in pluribus, uniformiter agere et ordinate."

Ex duabus praemissis, quorum una est necessaria et alia contingens, non sequitur conclusio necessaria. Et ratio est, quia quod dependet ex pluribus, non potest esse perfectioris conditionis quocumque illorum (*Quodl.* q. 15, n. 7; XXVI, 12a).

Scotus, therefore, does not ascribe the same degree of certitude to inductive and deductive knowledge. Although the conclusions obtained by induction are truly certain, they cannot be placed on the same level with strictly scientific conclusions in the Aristotelian sense.<sup>33</sup> In some cases, however, experimental knowledge serves as a starting point toward scientific knowledge, insofar as it offers the intellect an opportunity of arriving at the cognition of the causes of the observed phenomena. Once in possession of the causes, the intellect may be able to know, by way of demonstrative reasoning, one or more conclusions which at first were known by experience alone.

### 3. A Case of Demonstrative Certitude from Experience

Scotus, who is always in search of the best possible basis for intellectual knowledge, maintains that in certain instances experimental knowledge may lead up to an absolute or demonstrative certitude. Scotus distinguishes two steps in the process. First, the scientist must find the precise cause of the phenomenon he is observing, i.e., he must make sure that there is no alternative cause by which the phenomenon in question may be explained. This is done through the method of division or elimination (*per viam divisionis*). Secondly, the scientist must find a self-evident proposition which, when used as a major premise together with the proposition resulting from the previous operation as minor premise, enables him to know by demonstration the effect which he had known at first by experience alone. For instance, the observer knows through frequent experience that the moon is frequently eclipsed. This is as yet a conclusion *quia est*, i.e., a synthetical judgment based on empirical cognition. Once in possession of this experimental knowledge, the scientist sets out to inquire the cause of the phe-

33. *Oxon.* III, d. 24, q. un., n. 19; XV, 49a: "Inductio non sufficit ad scientiam, nec ideo scitur universale quia ex particularibus educitur. Unde magis sequitur scientificae: omne totum est majus sua parte, igitur hoc totum, quam econverso, scilicet hoc et illud totum, igitur omne."



nomenon. He does this by discarding all the possible factors which might constitute the cause of the darkening of the moon. By this process of elimination he finally arrives at the certain conclusion that the only cause preventing the light of the sun from reaching the moon is the interposition of the earth.

Now there is a principle which goes as follows: "An opaque body which interposes itself between a luminous body and an illumined object impedes the transmission of light from the former to the latter." This principle is self-evident and true in virtue of its terms, and therefore absolutely certain. It suffices to have a distinct idea of the nature of an opaque body and the manner of the transmission of light to make it clear and evident to the mind that an opaque body is always an obstacle to the transmission of light. As soon, therefore, as the observer comes to the cognition that the earth is the only opaque body interposed between sun and moon, he concludes with absolute certainty that the actual eclipse of the moon is caused by this interposition. His knowledge of the phenomenon is no longer merely empirical or a *conclusio quia est*, but it has become a strictly scientific or *propter quid* cognition which is obtained through an evident and necessary syllogistic reasoning in this manner: An opaque body which interposes itself between a luminous body and the object illumined by it impedes the transmission of light to the latter. The earth is such an opaque body between sun and moon. Hence it impedes the transmission of light from the sun to the moon:

Sed ulterius notandum quod quandoque accipitur experientia de conclusione, puta quod luna frequenter eclipsatur; et tunc supposita conclusione quod ita est, inquiritur causa talis conclusionis per viam divisionis, et quandoque devenitur ex conclusione experta ad principia nota ex terminis, et tunc ex tali principio noto ex terminis potest conclusio prius tantum secundum experientiam nota, certius cognosci, scilicet primo genere cognitionis, quia ut deducta ex principio per se noto: sicut istud est per se notum, quod opacum interpositum inter perspicuum et lumen impedit multiplicationem luminis ad tale perspicuum; et si inventum fuerit per divisionem quod terra tale est corpus interpositum inter solem et lunam, sciatur certissime demonstratione propter quid, quia per causam, et non tantum per experientiam, sicut sciebatur ista conclusio ante inventionem principii (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 31v, b; n. 9, IX, 176b-177a).<sup>34</sup>

34. Raymond (*loc. cit.*, p. 277) observes that modern sciences use a great number of general principles comparable to the self-evident major premise employed

A similar description of demonstrative knowledge on the basis of experience is found in the *Commentary on Metaphysics*. Scotus shows that a perfect *propter quid* cognition (as opposed to mere belief) is had only if the scientist is able to ascertain, by elimination, that the effect under consideration is produced by this particular cause, and by no other. Only after this has been ascertained can the observer conclude, through application of a self-evident principle, that the same effect will follow uniformly from the same cause. For the method of elimination enables him to know the effect not only through experience or mere observation, but through an immediate or *a priori* knowledge of the cause:

Primus...quantumcumque inquirat per viam divisionis...in fine non sciet, sed tantum credet...Secundus vero per viam divisionis sciet conclusionem propter quid, sciunt enim ita esse, et per viam divisionis scit quod propter aliud nihil ita est nisi propter hoc; sciet ergo propter hoc ita esse. Tertius vero applicando principium sciet propter quid; ergo secundus est dispositus ad sciendum propter quid dispositione propinqua, sed tertius propinquiori. Secundus enim quasi immediate demonstrabit causam per effectum quem novit, et ex hoc ultra cognoscet effectum per causam; sed tertius jam immediate per causam notam cognoscet effectum (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 19; VII, 62a-b).<sup>35</sup>

Hence it is the ability of the scientist to trace his particular conclusions to general self-evident principles or laws which impart his conclusions the highest possible degree of certitude.

All inductive certitude, therefore, rests in the final analysis on self-evidence. "Imperfect" induction which proceeds mainly on observation derives its scientific value from the general principle, "A frequent effect of a non-free cause proceeds from the nature of that cause." "Demonstrative" induction which is based on the knowledge of the causes owes its exceptional grade of certitude to other, more specific self-evident principles.

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by Scotus: "On distingue en effet deux sortes de lois induites, des *lois empiriques* et des *lois explicatives*. Les premières indiquent les modalités constantes de l'activité d'une substance spécifiquement déterminée; les secondes en donnent une raison beaucoup plus générale."

35. Cf. also: *Oxon.* prol. q. 1, n. 27; VIII, 62a.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE ROLE OF EVIDENCE FOR SENSE KNOWLEDGE

The insistence with which Scotus has endeavored to establish the independence on true sense knowledge of first principles and other self-evident propositions may have given rise to the impression that he doubts the objective value of sense knowledge as such.

Scotus is well aware of the insufficiencies of many of our sense perceptions, especially if they are taken uncritically. For the senses lie open to numerous illusions which are due either to subjective factors, such as indispositions of the sense organs, or to objective conditions, such as an unfavorable medium, a disproportionate distance or size of the object. But far from despairing of the possibility to arrive at true knowledge of sensible things, Scotus thinks that such knowledge can be had as long as sense activity is checked and controlled by the intellect. The Franciscan Doctor is continually on the outlook for ways and means of correcting the senses, and for supplementing the deficiencies of their information. His search has not been in vain, as the present chapter is about to show.

#### A. LIMITATIONS OF SENSE KNOWLEDGE

##### 1. *Imperfection of Sense Knowledge*

Certain knowledge through the senses has often been denied on the authority of St. Augustine. Time and again we meet with the time-honored formula of the bishop of Hippo: "A sensibilibus non est expectanda sincera veritas."<sup>1</sup> Henry of Ghent who shares this distrust toward sense knowledge tries to justify his position by an appeal to the mutability of all sensible things. He maintains that there is no certain knowledge of truth unless it is had under the aspect of immutability. But sensible things are subject to continual change. Therefore, the unassisted human reason cannot obtain certain knowledge of contingent things. Any "sincere" or perfect knowledge about sensible things presupposes the assistance of

1. *Liber LXXXIII Quaestionum* q. 9; PL 40, col. 13.

the Uncreated Light which makes these things known under at least some aspect of immutability.<sup>2</sup>

Scotus rejects both the assumption and the conclusion of Henry's argumentation. Even if we granted the assumption that all things are mutable, there would still be a possibility of certain knowledge, viz., of the fact that all things are continually changing. Even here an element of constancy is present, viz., the unceasing process of coming-to-be and passing-away. Moreover, it is clear that Henry is mistaken when he states that all things are absolutely changeable. Not everything in nature changes; in fact, many objects, though changing under one aspect, remain constant under another:

Ad illud de mutatione objecti, antecedens est falsum; non enim sensibilia sunt in continuo moto, imo permanent eadem in aliena duratione. ...Et consequentia non valet, dato quod antecedens esset verum; quia adhuc secundum Aristotelem<sup>3</sup> posset haberi certa cognitio de hoc, dato quod omnia continue moventur (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 32r, a; n. 13, IX, 181a-b).<sup>4</sup>

Yet Scotus is well aware that even though a certain degree of constancy is found in the sensible world, the senses are of themselves incapable of apprehending it. "Sincere truth," he writes, "is not grasped by the senses in such wise as to enable them to perceive the immutability of the truth they apprehend, or for this matter, the immutability itself of the object. For the senses perceive present objects only as long as these are present." Since sensible objects are not always present to the senses, these cannot perceive whether or not the aforementioned objects remain in the same state. Even supposing that I should have the object A uninterruptedly in my presence, and that I should gaze upon it without intermission, so that my vision would retain the same grade of sharpness throughout the whole process, I would still be unable to perceive the immutability of A, for at each moment of my vision I would perceive the object precisely as it is constituted at that same moment:

Ad auctoritatem Augustini salvandam, dici potest, quod sincera veritas non cognoscitur a sensu, ita quod sensus percipiat immutabilitatem veritatis quam apprehendit, nec objectum in quantum immobile; sensus

2. *Summa*, art. I, quaest. II, fol. 3v ss.

3. *Metaphysics* IV, c. 5; 1010a 6-20.

4. Cf. *Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 23; VII, 64b.



enim non percipit nisi praesens, et dum est praesens, et ideo non cognoscit ex se aliquid se habere, nisi dum praesens est, et non semper praesens est sensui corporali... Posito etiam quod semper continuaretur visio mea circa A objectum, sicut in primo instanti, non percipio immutabilitatem A quia pro tunc non percipio nisi ipsum ut tunc est praesens; ita etiam in tota visione quantumcumque continuata, nunquam percipiam immutabilitatem A, sed pro omni nunc percipiam quomodo se habet pro tunc (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 23; VII, 65a).

Scotus, therefore, grants to the objector that the senses are unable to convey truth formally; yet he refuses to acknowledge that it was St. Augustine's intention to reject simply and unconditionally all true knowledge through the channel of the senses. All that St. Augustine wanted to say is that the senses are unable to apprehend the truth of their own perceptions and to distinguish true perceptions from false ones. Since the senses probably do not reflect upon their species, they cannot discern whether they are informed by a mere species or image, or whether the species is produced in the phantasy by a real and present object:

Quoad secundam probationem Augustini dicendum quod forte sensus non reflectitur supra speciem, et ideo non discernit utrum tantum specie informetur, vel utrum objectum sit praesens specialiter de phantasia (*loc. cit.*, n. 24; VII, 65b). Bene concludunt quod non sit impossibile esse aliquam veritatem sinceram de sensibilibus, sed illam veritatem sinceram esse, sive ejus sinceritatem sive immutabilitatem, et a falso distinctam non percipit sensus, sicut dicit Augustinus (*ibid.*).

From these considerations it follows that the senses are neither to be trusted nor to be distrusted *a priori*. They only furnish the material of information to the intellect, without passing judgment on the value or reliability of their data. This is the task of the intellectual faculty as we shall see presently.

## 2. Intellectual Knowledge Superior to Sense Knowledge.

Intellectual knowledge, Scotus maintains, is absolutely superior to sense knowledge. In proof of his point, the Franciscan Doctor points out that the intellect can judge the value of every sense perception, by deciding upon the good or bad disposition of the senses. Furthermore, intellectual knowledge alone conveys true certitude. Certitude cannot be had by simply apprehending what is true (*verum*); it is also required that the truth (*veritas*) of what is

apprehended be known. In other words, the knower must be able to render account to himself that what he apprehends is true. Only the intellect, however, can reflect upon its acts and thus judge that it apprehends the *verum*:

Videtur concedendum quod in nobis cognitio intellectiva sit certior simpliciter quam sensitiva, quod probatur: tum quia de omni sensitiva potest intellectus judicare qualis ipsa est;<sup>5</sup> tum quia certitudo nunquam est in apprehendendo verum, nisi talis sciat veritatem apprehensam, vel sciat illud esse verum quod apprehendit...solus autem intellectus reflectitur judicando se apprehendere verum (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 12; VII, 58a).

It may be objected that the intellect cannot judge the truth or falsity of any sense knowledge except through another sense perception. It would seem, therefore, that the aforementioned judgment of the intellect is possible only on the condition that this new sense perception be obtained through a truer and more reliable sense. But what will happen if all the senses should err in their perceptions? On what basis will the intellect judge, in this case, whether a given sense is now deceived or not?

Sed contra hoc arguitur sic: Primo quia nullus intellectus judicat de actu sensus nisi per notitiam aliquam acceptam a sensu, forte veriori, et tunc judicat hunc sensum nunc non errare; sed si in omni actu sensus erraret, intellectus non haberet per quid judicaret sensum nunc errare (*loc. cit.*, n. 13; 58b).

Scotus replies that the knowledge by which the intellect evaluates a sense perception is dependent on the senses as on an occasional cause only. There are certain principles the truth of which can be known regardless of true or false sense perceptions. The task of the latter is limited to the apprehension and transmission to the intellect of the *simplicia*, i.e., of the subject and predicate of the principle:<sup>6</sup>

Respondeo ad hoc, quod intellectus judicat de actu sensus per notitiam ab actu sensus acceptam occasionaliter, vel quoad apprehensionem simplicium, non quoad compositionem principiorum (*ibid.*).

It is irrelevant whether the simple terms are obtained through a correct or erroneous sense perception. For, according to Scotus,

5. Cf. *Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 24; VII, 65b: "Est alia virtus superior ipsa sensitiva, quae semper judicat de bona et de mala dispositione sensus."

6. Cf. *supra*, pp. 125 ff.



first intellectual apprehensions are always true. A black object which by some reason or other is erroneously taken for white by the sense of sight produces exactly the same concept of whiteness in the mind as would an object which is white in reality. In order that whiteness be apprehended it is sufficient that a species which truly represents whiteness be transmitted to the intellect:

Prima operatio intellectus semper vera est, licet sequens sensum errantem; ita enim concipitur albedo, si visus apprehendat illud esse album quod est nigrum, sicut si albedo conciperetur a sensu vere vidente album, quia sufficit quod species vere repraesentativa albi veniat ad intellectum ad hoc ut simplici apprehensione album vere apprehendat (*ibid.*, 59a).

Scotus concedes that the intellect falls into error as often as it relies on the testimony of an erring sense for the formulation of a contingent proposition. This happens, we may add, not as a result of any intrinsic weakness or defect of the intellect, but as it were by accident, i.e., insofar as the intellect accepts the sense data without duly probing them as to their value. With regard to first principles, however, the intellect never errs, notwithstanding false sense information:

In compositione autem et divisione...errat intellectus sequens sensum errantem. Sed non circa prima principia, nec circa conclusiones quas ex primis principiis deduxit, sed circa alias conclusiones quarum notitiam non habet nisi ex sensu errante (*ibid.*).

It is by means of this superior certainty that the intellect can correct the mistakes of the senses. Whatever illusions may occur in the senses, the intellect is not necessarily led into error, for it is never forced to follow the erring sense. Rather, it should embrace the very opposite of what is conveyed by the sense, as soon as it becomes aware of the error:

Sed adhuc circa tales, licet aliquis sensus erret, tamen non oportet intellectum sequi, sed oppositum tenere, si iudicat hunc sensum errare (*loc. cit.*, 59b).

The main question, however, still remains to be answered, namely, How can the intellect decide which sense is true and which false? Henry of Ghent<sup>7</sup> thinks that a sense is true if it is

7. *Summa*, art. I, quaest. I, fol. 2v: "Semper oportet credere sensui particulari non impedito, nisi alius sensus dignior in eodem alio tempore, vel in alio eodem tempore contradicat, vel virtus aliqua superior percipiens sensus impedimentum."

not contradicted by the testimony of another sense which is truer, or by its own perceptions in a more favorable disposition. Likewise, the reliability of a sense perception may also be ascertained by an intellectual cognition obtained either through a truer sense, or through the same sense in a better disposition:

Sed quomodo (intellectus) judicabit quis sensus est verus, et quis errat? Responsio, Gandensis in *Summa* dicit quod omnis sensus est verus cui non contradicit alius sensus verior; vel ipsemet alias melius dispositus; vel notitia aliqua intellectualis accepta ab alio sensu veriori, vel eodem alias melius disposito (*loc. cit.*, n. 15, 59b).

Scotus seems to subscribe to these criteria, but he proposes a further question. Henry no doubt does rightly in contending that the perceptions of well disposed senses are more reliable than those of indisposed senses. But how, asks Scotus, can the intellect be sure that a particular sense is actually well disposed? This brings us to our next point.

#### B. CORRECTION OF SENSES THROUGH SELF-EVIDENT PRINCIPLES

In both the *Commentary on Metaphysics* and the *Oxoniense*, Scotus uses the self-evident principle of induction as a means of correcting the senses. "It seems to be self-evident," he writes in the *Metaphysics*, "that since nature (i.e., any natural agent) is a necessary (*per se*) or non free cause, it will for the most part act rightly. If errors occur, they will be in the smaller number." Belonging as they do to the category of natural agents, which do not determine themselves freely, the senses react naturally or necessarily to external stimuli. Hence the representation which an object produces in the greater number of cases or habitually, will be the true representation of it:

Quomodo iudicatur quis sensus est bene dispositus? Responsio, per se notum videtur quod natura, ex quo est causa per se et non libera, ut in pluribus recte agit, et error si contingat, in minori parte accidet; quod ergo sensus ut in pluribus dicit, hoc est verum (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 15; VII, 59b).<sup>8</sup>

8. Cf. E. Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot" in *Archives d'hist. doct. et litt. du M. A.* II (1927), p. 125. Gilson attributes the solution presented in the text to Henry of Ghent. However, there is no evidence for this in the *Summa*. True, Henry seeks a solution in repeated experience ("habet iudicare intellectus ex pluribus experimentationibus" art. I, quaest. I, f 3r G); but the application of the principle of induction is original with Scotus.



It may be objected that judgments based merely on the majority of cases are often misleading. If the trustworthiness of a sense is to be decided on the greater number of identical perceptions, we would have to conclude that, if there were only three sane or normal persons among all mankind, we would have to reject the judgment of the three sane persons in favor of that of the majority. This is obviously absurd.

Scotus answers that the criterion of truth is not the convergency of many simultaneous sense perceptions, but the convergency of a great number of successive sense perceptions. In other words, if one and the same sense experiences repeatedly and habitually the same quality in a thing, it can and should be trusted:

Contra, unum non oportet pluralitate judicare, quia tunc si tantum tres essent sani, et omnes alii infirmi, iudicium sanorum refutandum esset....Ad primum, non pluralitate sensuum simul, sed pluralitate sensationum, hoc est, quia sensus frequenter ita sentit (oportet judicare) (*ibid.*, 60a).

A similar, but more extensive, solution is presented in the *Oxonienne*. Scotus starts his expositions by introducing an important distinction. In our various sense perceptions we are confronted either with convergent or with divergent sense data. Accordingly, the evaluation and correction of the senses must also differ from case to case.

### 1. *Evaluation of Convergent Sense Perceptions*

"How is certitude had," asks Scotus, "about the objects which fall under sense perception, as for example, that something which appears as white or hot is really so?"

Sed quomodo habetur certitudo eorum quae subsunt actibus sensus, puta quod aliquod extra est album vel calidum, quale apparet? (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 32r, a; n. 11, IX, 179b).

Scotus replies that either various senses have opposite perceptions of the object in question, or else not, but all senses have identical perceptions of it. If the second alternative is realized, i.e., if an object produces convergent or uniform impressions on two or more senses, then we are certain of the truth of what is thus known. In fact, if the same effect is produced on two or more senses by one and the same object, this effect must be ascribed

to the very nature of the object. For that which proceeds frequently from a non-free cause is its natural effect.<sup>9</sup> Nature, because of the determinateness of its activity, cannot deceive. Hence, the species or impression produced successively in the same sense, or simultaneously in two or more senses, truly represents the external reality of the object. "Thus a thing outside will be white or hot or such as is naturally represented by the species it generates in several cases:"

Respondeo, aut circa tale cognitum eadem opposita apparent diversis sensibus, aut non, sed omnes sensus cognoscentes illud habent idem iudicium de eo. Si secundo modo, tunc certitudo habetur de veritate talis cogniti per sensus, et per istam propositionem praecedentem, quod evenit in pluribus ab aliquo illud est causa<sup>10</sup> naturalis ejus, si non sit causa libera; ergo cum ab ipso praesente ut in pluribus evenit talis immutatio sensus, sequitur quod immutatio vel species genita sit effectus naturalis talis causae, et ita tale extra erit album vel calidum, vel tale aliquid quale natum est repraesentari per speciem genitam ab ipso ut in pluribus (*ibid.*).

If applied to the convergency of several senses, the present rule is of course applicable only to those objects which can be apprehended by more than one sense; these are the so-called *sensibilia communia* or common sense objects, such as size, number, motion, rest, and configuration, all of which can be apprehended by at least two senses. Thus the quadrangular configuration of a brick can be perceived by both sight and touch; an explosion can be perceived by the senses of hearing, sight, touch, and smell.

It is easily seen that this application of the inductive method goes beyond that of the commentary on *Metaphysics*. Scotus confirms and completes the latter in at least one important aspect. While in the *Metaphysics* certitude is based on a uniform testimony of the same sense in a great many successive instances,<sup>11</sup> the *Oxoniense* sees the best foundation for certitude in a convergent and simultaneous perception of the same object by several senses. Moreover, while the principle of induction was introduced somewhat hesitatingly in the mentioned Commentary ("per se notum videtur"),<sup>12</sup> it is applied here with full confidence as to its self-evidence.

9. Cf. *supra*, p. 254.

10. *Effectus Viv.*

11. *Supra*, p. 291.

12. *Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 15; VII, 59b.



2. *Correction of Divergent Sense Perceptions*

It frequently happens that one and the same thing produces conflicting impressions in two or more senses. Thus a staff partly dipped into water appears to the sense of sight as broken or bent. The sense of touch, however, tells us that the staff is and remains straight. Which of the two senses is to be trusted? Likewise, the sun appears to the sense of sight as being smaller than it is in reality. And in general, the further an object is removed from the observer, the smaller it appears. Does this indicate that the sense of sight is necessarily exposed to error? And if not, how is it to be rectified?

Si autem diversi sensus habeant diversa iudicia de aliquo viso extra, puta visus dicit baculum esse fractum cujus pars est in aqua et pars est in aere;<sup>13</sup> visus semper dicit solem esse minoris quantitatis quam est, et omne visum a remotis esse minus quam sit? (*Ibid.*).<sup>14</sup>

Here again Scotus offers a solution which is indeed worthy of his subtle mind. Mandoñedo<sup>15</sup> rightly remarks that in the paragraph we are about to quote the problem of the existence and reality of the external world is exposed with the clarity and exactness of a philosopher of our own day.<sup>16</sup> For instance, the theory of inference or illationism, which has been so widely propounded in Modern Scholasticism by the School of Louvain, can be found in its basic points in Scotus' doctrine as presented in the *Oxoniense*. Illationism maintains that once the possibility of illusion is admitted in both the internal and external senses, one must search for an absolutely reliable point of departure in some higher faculty, by which the senses can be corrected. This is precisely the way in which Scotus solves the problem. He, too, demands a higher type of certitude by which the value of divergent sense perceptions may be estimated.

13. Et tactus potest experiri contrarium add. *Viv.*

14. Cf. *Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 15; VII, 60a.

15. "Abstracción y realismo según el B.J.D. Escoto" in *Collectanea Franciscana*, VII (1937), pp. 18 ff. Concerning Scotus' influence on Card. Mercier, the founder of the mentioned School, see: J.M. Martinez, O.F.M., "Criteriologia Escotista" in *Verdad Y Vida*, III (1945), p. 652, note 2, and p. 671, note 38. - Cf. also: Fr. Raymond, O.F.M. Cap., "La Philosophie de l'Intuition et la Philosophie du Concept" in *Etudes Franciscaines*, XXI (1909), p. 693.

16. Cf., for instance, Georges van Riet, *L'Epistémologie Thomiste* (Louvain, 1946, pp. 174f.)

According to the Franciscan Doctor, man is not in want of a higher court of appeal of this sort. The human intellect is provided with propositions known through their terms and dependent on sense perception as on an occasional cause only. Scotus goes as far as to state that for every case of conflicting sense testimony some self-evident proposition is provided. Since these propositions "which rest in the soul" are more certain than any sense perception, they can always advise the intellect whether a given sense datum is true or false:

In talibus est certitudo quid verum sit, et quis sensus erret per propositionem quiescentem in anima certiore omni iudicio sensus, et per actus plurium sensuum concurrentes, ita quod semper aliqua propositio rectificat mentem vel intellectum de actibus sensus, quis sit verus et quis fallat, in qua propositione intellectus non dependet a sensu sicut a causa sed sicut ab occasione (*loc. cit.*, IX, 180a).

The reader will have noticed that Scotus also mentions the convergency of several senses ("per actus plurium sensuum concurrentes") as a criterion. The following example makes it clear that this criterion is not out of place, as would appear at first sight. There is of course no convergency of sight and touch in the actual apprehension of a staff partly dipped into water. Yet there is convergency in the sense that both sight and touch attest to the fact that water recedes from a hard or solid object. These two convergent perceptions give occasion to the formulation of a self-evident proposition by means of which the illusion produced by the staff can be corrected. Every intellect that apprehends the meaning of the terms "solid" and "soft" is in a position to formulate this proposition: "No solid object can be broken by contact with a soft body which recedes from it." This proposition fulfills the requirements of a self-evident principle. It is not only evident in virtue of its terms, but even if these resulted from erring senses, the intellect still could not doubt its truth. No intellect can deny the proposition without incurring contradiction. It follows, therefore, that the staff is not bent as it appears to the sense of sight. "And thus," Scotus concludes, "the intellect judges through something more certain than any act of sense, which sense errs and which does not err with respect to the breaking of the staff."



Exemplum: intellectus habet istam propositionem quiescentem: Nullum durius frangitur tactu alicujus mollis sibi cedentis; haec est ita per se nota ex terminis, quod etiamsi essent accepti a sensibus errantibus, non potest intellectus dubitare de illa, imo oppositum includit contradictionem; sed quod baculus sit durior aqua, et aqua sibi cedat, hoc dicit uterque sensus, tam visus quam tactus; sequitur ergo: Baculus non est fractus sicut sensus visus<sup>17</sup> judicat ipsum fractum; et ita quis sensus erret et quis non circa fractionem baculi, intellectus judicat per certius omni actu sensus (*loc. cit.*, 180a).

A similar self-evident proposition enables the intellect to correct the illusions of the sense of sight concerning distant things:

Similiter ex alia parte, quod idem quantum applicatum quanto omnino est aequale sibi, hoc est notum intellectui, quantumcumque notitia terminorum accipiat a sensu errante. Sed quod idem quantum possit applicari viso propinquo et remoto, hoc dicit tam visus quam tactus; ergo quantum visum sive prope sive a remotis est aequale; igitur visus dicens hoc esse minus errat (*loc. cit.*, 180b).

The principle, "Idem quantum applicatum quanto omnino est aequale sibi," seems to be understood in this sense: A *quantum* or body of which we know that it remains unchanged or identical with itself can also be known to remain equal in size. That a body remains unchanged or identical can be ascertained thus. By closely observing a present object through the senses of touch and sight I can determine its exact size. Then, after the object has been removed to a certain distance, I notice that it appears smaller to the sense of sight. In order to assure myself I approach the object again, and verify through the same two senses that the thing has not changed in size. On the basis of the identity of these repeated experiences I conclude that a body remains equal in size or quantity whether it is seen nearby or at a distance.<sup>18</sup> Hence the sense of sight errs in presenting a distant object with a smaller size. The ultimate reason for the illusions produced by distant things is that *size* belongs to the *sensibilia communia*. A *sensibile commune* does not, as such, stimulate any particular sense. It is only accidentally related to one or more faculties of sensation. Hence it happens that when a *sensibile commune* is considered in relation

17. Visus *add. Viv.*

18. Cf. Martinez, *loc. cit.*, p. 673.

to one sense only, it is not apprehended as it is in reality.<sup>19</sup> The truth can therefore be known only with the assistance of infallible intellectual cognitions and through the convergency of two or more sense perceptions:

Haec conclusio concluditur ex principiis per se notis et ex actibus duorum sensuum cognoscentium ut in pluribus ita esse (*ibid.*).

In the *Commentary on Metaphysics* Scotus adduces another principle for the correction of erroneous sense information regarding distant things. The sense of sight, he explains, would make us believe that distant things are smaller than they are in reality. Natural reason, however, tells us that remote agents act more feebly, because of their limited energy. In other words, it is self-evident that the degree of fidelity with which a sense object is apprehended is always conditioned by the proportion between object and sense:

Ad secundum<sup>20</sup> per idem, quia sensus dicit distans minus apparere, et ratio naturalis dicit quia remotius agens debilius agit, cum sit finitae virtutis (*Metaph.* I, q. 4, n. 15; VII, 60a).

It is not without good reasons that proportion is so frequently mentioned among the prerequisites for trustworthy sense perception. The sense faculties, whose constitution is not purely spiritual but physical as well, are also subject in their operations to the conditions which govern physical reactions in general. Proportion in the present instance is equivalent to an adequate degree of nearness or proximity, without which a material agent cannot produce its adequate effect on the senses.

We may conclude from the preceding texts and comments that although we are not in a position to determine the exact size or configuration of many objects through the senses alone, one thing, however, is clear: we are not necessarily led into error by the

19. P.F. Cherubini, *Cursus philosophicus ad mentem Doctoris Subtilis* (Rome, 1905) II, pp. 247 f.: "Sensile commune non afficit primo sensus, potest accidere ut relatum tantum ad unum sensum, non plene percipiatur sicut est in se; v.g., statuæ magnitudo in distant: tunc autem homo ne decipiatur in parte (nam in visione statuæ in genere non accidit deceptio) debet aliis sensibus et praecipue ratione uti...; v.g. in casu statuæ debet accedere ad eam, manibusque contrectare."

20. Scotus is here replying to this objection: "Semper visus errat de quantitate solis et lunae, et fractione baculi in aqua, etc." (*ibid.*).



senses. Moreover, even concerning such distant things as are the heavenly bodies, our condition is not such as to make us despair of attaining at least a proximate, if not exact, knowledge of their size and shape. Once we realize that our unassisted senses cannot give reliable information, we start searching for means and ways to make up for this inadequacy. This, for example, is what the science of astronomy has accomplished with the assistance of other exact sciences.

Scotus sums up his inquiry by stating that in all cases where the intellect judges and corrects the erring sense, this is done by a twofold superior kind of knowledge. First, it is done by a cognition which is not dependent on the senses as its cause, but is merely occasioned by them. With regard to this knowledge the intellect never errs, although all the senses should err. Secondly, this correction by the intellect is effected by a cognition produced in one or more senses in the greater number of cases. This sense knowledge is true in virtue of the principle of induction. For an identical effect produced in several senses, or in the same sense successively, must be attributed to the nature itself of the agent:

Et ita ubicumque ratio iudicat sensum errare, hoc iudicat non per aliquam notitiam praecise acquisitam a sensibus ut causa, sed per aliquam notitiam occasionatam a sensu, in qua non fallitur, etiamsi omnes sensus fallantur, et per aliquam aliam notitiam acquisitam a sensu vel a sensibus ut in pluribus, quae sciuntur esse vera per propositionem saepe allegatam, scilicet quod in pluribus, etc. (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 4, f. 32v, a; n. 12, IX, 180b).

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we may confidently state that Scotus' teaching on evidence constitutes both an innovation in, and a major contribution to, the Scholastic theory of knowledge. It is an innovation inasmuch as evidence is considered a sufficient foundation of true and certain knowledge, regardless of whether the latter is of a necessary or contingent nature. By shifting the stress from objective necessity to objective evidence, Scotus has opened the road to a new concept of scientific knowledge which is both more realistic and more comprehensive than the aprioristic *scientia* of Aristotle and his followers.

Scotus' doctrine is a major contribution to epistemology insofar as it offers a satisfactory solution to the problems concerned with certain knowledge of contingents. Not only does he offer a keen analysis of introspective evidence, he also sets forth its basic function for all subjective certitude, not excepting that of first principles.

The originality of Scotus' teaching on induction, in which he complements the limitations of sense knowledge by infallible self-evident principles, should be apparent to anyone acquainted with medieval thought.

Finally, by his ingenious application of self-evident principles to sensible knowledge, the Franciscan Doctor succeeds in solving the crucial and ever reverting problem posed by really or apparently conflicting evidences in sensible knowledge.



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THE PHILOSOPHY OF ABRAHAM SHALOM

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THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF ABRAHAM SHALOM

*A Fifteenth-Century Exposition and Defense  
of Maimonides*

Alon  
BY HERBERT A. DAVIDSON

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## PREFACE

ABRAHAM SHALOM, the subject of the present study, cannot be counted among the Jewish philosophers of very first rank. However intellectual and cultural history can hardly be complete if it deals exclusively with the outstanding figures, without considering, as far as possible, thinkers at all levels. Even our knowledge of the great thinker is itself in a certain sense incomplete unless we know the degree to which he was representative of his lesser contemporaries and provocative for his lesser successors. While the present study is primarily intended to provide an organized exposition of Shalom's thought and its sources, it may contribute a bit of detail both to the total picture of medieval Jewish thought and philosophy, and also to the place of one outstanding figure, Moses Maimonides, within that picture. Shalom, although not brilliant, was a well-educated man, and his book, *Neweh Shalom*, indicates the way in which the philosophic education of the Spanish Jews was kept up through the very trying period of the fifteenth century. *Neweh Shalom* also indicates the influence which Moses Maimonides still had three centuries after his death. Shalom's declared motto was that "Moses [Maimonides] is true and his teaching (*tora*h) is true." This declaration did not eliminate the flexibility which is always inherent in interpretations of the written word. Nevertheless, it was meant in complete sincerity and is, in fact, the recurring theme in almost all of Shalom's philosophic discussions. When we further consider the fact that most of the philosophic conceptions with which Shalom operates derive either directly or indirectly from Maimonides, we are provided with a gauge of the striking dominance which Maimonides continued to exercise among the Jews up to the end of the Middle Ages. Thus while Shalom's actual intent was to demonstrate the philosophic truth of a certain system of thought, he contributes in perhaps an even greater degree to our appreciation of that system's historical significance.

The present study was completed during the period when I was a Junior Fellow at Harvard University, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Society of Fellows and the Senior Fellows for the ideal working conditions and intellectual stimulation that I enjoyed there. The cost of publication has been defrayed in part by the Alexander Kohut Foundation and I wish to thank that organization as well. My greatest debt is to a single individual, Professor Harry A. Wolfson of Harvard University. I was fortunate in having had his guidance for a number of years including the time when I was writing this study of Shalom as a doctoral dissertation and subsequently was preparing it for publication. I enjoyed his aid and encouragement in innumerable ways, tangible and intangible, and was always able to call upon his veritable genius for analysis and synthesis. As a token of admiration and thanks, I respectfully dedicate this book to him.

H. A. D.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in the notes:

- M. N. Moses Maimonides, *Moreh Nebukim (Guide for the Perplexed)*, Warsaw, 1930. In citations the Roman numeral indicates the "part," the first Arabic numeral indicates the chapter, the second Arabic numeral indicates the page, and "a" or "b" indicates recto or verso. E.g., "II, 13, 30a" means "Part II, chap. 13, p. 30, recto."
- M. H. Levi Gersonides, *Milhamot ha-Shem*, Leipzig, 1866. The upper-case Roman numeral indicates the "book" (*ma'amar*), the first Arabic numeral indicates the chapter, and the second Arabic numeral indicates the page. Occasionally the books are divided into "parts" (*heleg*) and this is indicated by a lower-case Roman numeral after the number of the book. E.g., "VI, i, 7, 315" means "Book VI, part one, chap. 7, p. 315."
- O. H. Hasdai Crescas, *Or ha-Shem*: Book I, Parts 1 and 2, edited by H. A. Wolfson as *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, Cambridge, Mass., 1929; Book I, Part 3, and Books II-IV, Vienna, 1859. The upper-case Roman numeral indicates the "book" (*ma'amar*), the lower-case Roman numeral indicates the "part" (*kelal*), the first Arabic numeral indicates the chapter, the second Arabic numeral indicates the page, and "a" or "b" (in the case of the Vienna edition only) indicates recto or verso. E.g., "II, v, 4, 49a" means "Book II, part five, chap. 4, p. 49, recto, in the Vienna edition."
- N. Sh. Abraham Shalom, *Neweh Shalom*, Venice, 1575. The upper-case Roman numeral indicates the "book" (*ma'amar*), the first Arabic numeral indicates the chapter, the second Arabic numeral indicates the page, and "a" or "b" indicates recto or verso. Occasionally the books are divided into "parts" (*derush*) and this is indicated by a lower-case Roman numeral after the number of the book. E.g., "VII, ii, 6, 114b" means "Book VII, part two, chap. 6, p. 114, verso."



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

THE BIOGRAPHICAL data on Abraham Shalom, although scanty, are still sufficient to provide a background for a study of his thought. Shalom is reported to have lived in Catalonia, Spain, and to have died in 1492, the year in which the Jews were exiled from the country.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that he is identical with a certain physician named Abraham Shalom who was given a licence to treat Christian patients in Cervera at a time when it was legally forbidden and in practice infrequent for Jewish physicians to have a Christian clientele.<sup>2</sup> He is known to have produced one work in Hebrew, entitled *Neweh Shalom* (*Abode of Peace*), with a play on the author's name.<sup>3</sup> In addition there are extant in manuscript, translations which he made into Hebrew of two Latin works, one, a compendium of the physical sciences by Albertus Magnus (or by one Albert *de Orlamunde*) entitled *Philosophia Pauperum*,<sup>4</sup> the other, a discussion of certain problems on Aristotle's *Organon*, by Marsilius of Inghen.<sup>5</sup>

While nothing further can be said with any degree of certainty about Shalom himself,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Sambari, *Dibre Yosef*, Vol. I of *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, edited by A. Neubauer (Oxford, 1887), p. 140: הר' אברהם שלום הזקן בעל ספר נוח שלום בקאטאלוניא ונפטר שנת רנ"ב. (For this reference I am indebted to Meir Benayahu of Jerusalem.) The date agrees with a remark in the publisher's introduction to *Neweh Shalom* (1st ed., p. i: ואולם הספר הזה היה גנוז וחתום כמון: (באוצרות שנים שלשה מהשרידים אשר ה' קורא) which suggests that Shalom had been dead for some time in 1539. M. Steinschneider, however, questioned the date, presumably because of a reference to an Abraham Shalom who was alive during the sixteenth century (*Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* [Berlin, 1893], p. 465); cf. below, n. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*, I Teil, *Urkunden* (Berlin, 1929), I, 862, n. 1. For regulations concerning Jewish physicians see F. (Yishaq) Baer, *Toledot ha-Yehudim be-Sefarad ha-Noṣrit* [*History of the Jews in Christian Spain*] (Tel Aviv, 1944-1945), chap. 5, pp. 408-409, chap. 6, p. 452.

<sup>3</sup> Published in Constantinople, 1539, and republished from that edition in Venice, 1574; no manuscripts are known. The title of the book is borrowed from Isa. 32:18. For the custom among Jewish writers of employing as book titles Biblical verses which suggest their names, cf. S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, First series (Philadelphia, 1896), pp. 275-277.

<sup>4</sup> On the authorship of *Philosophia Pauperum* see M. Grabmann, *Die Philosophia Pauperum und ihr Verfasser* (Münster, 1918), pp. 47-50; B. Geyer, *Die Albert dem Grossen zugeschriebene Summa Naturalium* (Münster, 1938), pp. 1-2, 42-47. For the text see Albertus Magnus, *Omnia Operum*, edited by A. Borgnet, V (Paris, 1890), 445 ff.; and Geyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 4\*-82\*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, pp. 465, 469. Only one copy of each is known, to be found in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek of Hamburg, and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, respectively. (Both libraries were kind enough to supply me with a microfilm reproduction.) The identification of the author of *Neweh Shalom* as the translator of the former of the two works is established by several references in *Neweh Shalom* to the translation (VII, ii, 4, 102a: ויזה כלו בארתי בספרי ובהעתקי הנקרא אוצר העינים [צ"ל העינים]; II, 9, 36b; cf. Steinschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 465). His identity as the translator of the second work is borne out by the fact that the same genealogy is given both there and in *Neweh Shalom* (Author's introduction, p. i, in both editions): Abraham b. Isaac, b. Judah b. Samuel Shalom.

<sup>6</sup> David Conforte, *Qore ha-Dorot*, edited by D. Cassel (Berlin, 1846), p. 37a, refers to an Abraham Shalom who was living in Safed, Palestine, in the sixteenth century; cf. M. Steinschneider, *Catalog der Hebräischen Handschriften in der Stadtbibliothek zu Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1878), p. 110. However, the name is not sufficiently unusual to make an identification with the author of *Neweh Shalom* even probable.

a good deal is known about the period in which he lived. In 1391 violent popular riots broke out against the Jews in Spain, resulting in considerable loss of life and property. These riots caused serious demoralization within the Jewish community and, both directly and indirectly, caused mass conversions of Jews to Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Further mass conversions arising from fear took place from 1411 to 1413.<sup>8</sup> With the advantage of hindsight, knowing that in 1492 the ancient Jewish community in Spain was dealt a final blow, it may be tempting to depict the fifteenth century as a period when that community was already in its death throes. But this would be an inaccurate judgment, for Jewish life seems to have recovered during the century, although never approximating the glory of earlier days.<sup>9</sup> It could, therefore, only have been a prophet in fact, or a prophet of doom by temperament, who might have predicted that the very end of Jewish life in Spain was imminent.

Shalom was neither, and those of his remarks which may be referred to contemporary conditions are such as would be expected from a sensible observer. He deplores the decline in "knowledge" and "wisdom" which had taken place, "especially," he says, in his generation.<sup>10</sup> He also laments the large number of Jews who "had left the body of Israel and denied the principles of the Torah," both as a result of the "length of the exile,"<sup>11</sup> and through the influence of certain people who had risen to "contest the Torah and dispute with our sages."<sup>12</sup> The reference in these remarks is clearly to the mass conversions which started during the persecutions of 1391, to the writings of various Jewish apostates, and to the forced disputations of 1413-1414 between one Jewish apostate and a number of eminent Jewish scholars; these disputations led to yet further conversions.<sup>13</sup>

The picture suggested by Shalom's remarks is somber, but still is not hopeless. Shalom does not speak of economic hardship among his people. While he describes the conversions as widespread, he also writes that most of the remaining Jews of his time preserved their faith in the "dogmas of the Torah" although without being perfectly scrupulous in observing all of the religious rites; and, he adds, there was still the "remnant whom the Lord calls"<sup>14</sup> which continued to devote itself completely to the study and observance of the Law.<sup>15</sup> Some significance might also be ascribed to the fact that Shalom has no expectations of impending Messianic events;<sup>16</sup> considering his general religious attitude, such expectations would have been likely had he believed that Jewish life in Spain was at its lowest ebb. Thus it is fairly clear that, although dissatisfied with condi-

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, Hebrew ed., chap. 5, pp. 365-374.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 6, pp. 451 ff.

<sup>10</sup> N. Sh. V, 5, 66b.

<sup>11</sup> N. Sh. IV, 1, 53a: הגלות לאורך התורה עקרי ישראל ויכפרו עקרי התורה לאורך הגלות.

<sup>12</sup> N. Sh. IX, 9, 169a: והתפרסם כמה רעות ושמדות הגיעו לישראל בקמים נגד התורה ולהתוכח עם החכמים.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, Hebrew ed., chap. 5. The debates of 1413-1414 were initiated by a converted Jew, one Geronimo de Santa Fe, and took place in Tortosa at the court of the antipope Benedict XIII. The procedure was such that the Jewish party was placed at some disadvantage and stated its case so poorly that many Jews left their faith through disillusionment.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Joel 3: 5; the expression is used by Maimonides in the same sense (M. N. I, 34, 54a).

<sup>15</sup> N. Sh. XI, 3, 193a: יאמין . . . לכל איש אשר . . . בשני פנים אם בכלל . . . קיום התורה בגלות יבחן עקרי התורה מבלי שידקדק במצות הפרטיות . . . וזה רוב המון האנשים המשתדלים היום בקיום התורה . . . קיום התורה בייחוד יאמר לשרידים אשר ה' קורא והם אנשי השכל המשתדלים . . . בקיום המצות בעיון ימנעו.

<sup>16</sup> N. Sh. IV, 1, 53a: דבר נסתר ונעלם ממנו וגלוי לפניו יתב'.



tions in his time, Shalom had no inkling of the disaster which was to overtake the Spanish Jewish community in the year of his own death. He was writing, in other words, for a community which he thought had declined, but which he also considered to have a future.

#### NEWEH SHALOM

The introduction to *Neweh Shalom* indicates that the book was intended to serve two purposes, one apologetic and homiletic, the other philosophic. The former, which is expressed more clearly, is explained by Shalom's knowledge of certain Jews who had been influenced by the views of "the Greeks"<sup>17</sup> and were thereby led to discredit the Talmudic Haggadah. In opposition, he states his own view that all of the sundry observations of the rabbis, including even their "idle conversation," are expressions of a profound wisdom. It is accordingly the "entire intention" of his book merely to unveil that wisdom and thereby "fortify the stronghold of the rabbis" and "enforce their peace" against all foes; the title, *Abode of Peace*, is explained as referring to this "enforcement of peace."<sup>18</sup> In order to realize his object Shalom outlines a plan of passing through the entire Talmud and commenting upon those statements which appear to be frivolous, yet contain an inner meaning.<sup>19</sup> In fact, though, he found sufficient scope for his endeavors in the first tractate of the Talmud, *Berakot*, and his book takes the form of a series of homilies on passages drawn from there.

Although this program of justifying the sayings of the rabbis is described by Shalom as his "entire intention," both the introduction to *Neweh Shalom* and a survey of the book itself show that he is also pursuing a second object. In the introduction he refers to a program according to which he would review the philosophic statements of his predecessors, considering just those views which are in harmony with scripture, and deciding which among them is correct.<sup>20</sup> This promise is realized in a series of philosophic discussions, all of which take the form of digressions from the underlying homiletic framework of *Neweh Shalom*.<sup>21</sup> It seems probable that these philosophic sections were originally composed independently and then incorporated into the homilies, although it is also possible that they were in fact actual digressions made by Shalom as he worked. In either case, however, they do represent a distinct theme and must be considered as such.

*Shalom's literary style.*—Stylistically the *Neweh Shalom* is a medley of Biblical, rabbinic,

<sup>17</sup> I.e., the Greek philosophers. Shalom is following Nahmanides who disparagingly named Aristotle "the Greek." Cf. Nahmanides' commentary on the Pentateuch, Lev. 16:8, quoted in N. Sh. V, 4, 66a. For other examples of the expression, cf. H. A. Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), p. 539, n. 14.

<sup>18</sup> N. Sh., Author's introduction, pp. ii-iii: בנה בניתי בית חבורי קראתיו נוח שלום כי יחזק במעו: דברי ר' י'ל יעשה שלום מכל אויביהם במה שיפרסם חכמתם שאפילו שיחה בטלה שלהם צריכה תלמוד (ע' יט:).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iii.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*: אני בצדק אחזה פני החקירה העשויה ואביא כל הדעות הנאותות לתורה בזרוע נטויה ואכריע מי מהם יכשר.

<sup>21</sup> For example, when Shalom happens upon references in *Berakot* to the creation of the world (*Berakot* 2a; N. Sh. I, 1, 1a), the divine attributes (*Berakot* 33b; N. Sh. XII, i, 1, 198a), and human free will (*Berakot* 33b; N. Sh. XII, ii, 1, 208a), he takes the opportunity to pass to a detailed philosophic analysis of those topics. Even his discussion of technical philosophic problems is connected with Talmudic passages (N. Sh. IV, ii, 1, 57b, referring to *Berakot* 7b; N. Sh. VII, ii, 1, 107a, referring to *Berakot* 10a).

and philosophic phraseology; the first two elements are most characteristic and we shall limit our illustrations to these.<sup>22</sup>

Biblical phrases are employed by Shalom for no other reason than that he relishes the rhetorical effect which they produce. For example, although it would have been simpler to assert in prosaic terms that he had refuted a certain opponent's theory, he prefers to couch his claim in phrases borrowed from biblical poetry; he writes that his critique "smote the head" of his opponent's arguments, "yea it pierced and struck through the temple of his utterances, and where those utterances sunk, there they fell down dead."<sup>23</sup> Again, when explaining that he is about to maintain a view which is opposed to that of other writers, he combines a number of Biblical verses and writes: "Being jealous for the Lord of Hosts<sup>24</sup> and zealous to deliver the truth out of the hand of its oppressors,<sup>25</sup> as the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear,<sup>26</sup> I shall not respect any man's person.<sup>27</sup> . . . Indeed I am as a drop of a bucket<sup>28</sup> against these sages whose little finger is thicker than my loins.<sup>29</sup> Yet there is a spirit in man<sup>30</sup> to acknowledge the truth in any problem and to contend with him that is mightier than he. . . ."<sup>31</sup> Biblical phraseology is also employed by Shalom to convey theoretical and even technical philosophic concepts. Thus in order to express the doctrine that the material element in man contains a force which must be subdued before man can hope to improve himself, Shalom adopts an appropriate phrase from the prophet and describes matter as a "wild ass, used to the wilderness of desires."<sup>32</sup> Or, when referring to the theory that each stage in the universe is the product of an emanation from the stage above it, he borrows from the Joseph story: the process of emanation, he writes, "began at the eldest and left off at the youngest, and the goblet of emanation is found in the sack of the latter, brought thither from the higher region."<sup>33</sup>

The legal terminology of the rabbis is used by Shalom both in homiletic and philosophic contexts. In a purely homiletic context, for example, wishing to draw an affirmative inference from a negative statement,<sup>34</sup> he quotes the Talmudic rule: "From *no*, you understand *yes*."<sup>35</sup> But this involves him in a contradiction from which he extricates himself through another Talmudic rule: he employs the legal distinction between a case with one unsound aspect and the even weaker case with two unsound aspects.<sup>36</sup> A more significant legal term used by Shalom is *pasaq*. This term, which originally meant "to cut" and thence "to decide," was used by the rabbis in the strict sense of announcing a

<sup>22</sup> Philosophic distinctions underlie Shalom's differentiation, e.g., of the *essential* and *accidental*, or *primary* and *secondary intentions* in a Biblical verse (N. Sh. II, 5, 31b). Also cf. below n. 73. The philosophic content of Shalom's homilies is referred to below, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> N. Sh. III, 5, 47b; cf. Judg. 5: 26-27.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. I Kings 19: 10, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Jer. 21: 12.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Amos 3: 12.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Job 32: 21.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Isa. 40: 15.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. I Kings 12: 10; I Chron. 10: 10.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Job 32: 8.

<sup>31</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 21a. Cf. Eccles. 6: 10.

<sup>32</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 4, 128a. Cf. Jer. 2: 28.

<sup>33</sup> N. Sh. VI, 11, 81a. Cf. Gen. 44: 12.

<sup>34</sup> N. Sh. II, 9, 39b: *מקום ומכלל לאו אהה* של עושיין רצונו של ישראל מטורים למערכה כל זמן שהם עושיין רצונו של מקום ומכלל לאו אהה. *שומע הין שכל זמן שעוברים על רצונו ימסרו לכוכבי השמים*.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. W. Bacher, *Die Älteste Terminologie der Jüdische Schriftauslegung* (Leipzig, 1899), p. 43.

<sup>36</sup> N. Sh. II, 9, 39b-40a. Cf. *Niddah* 2b.



## Introduction

legal decision that was to remain normative.<sup>37</sup> The term is now employed by Shalom to state final decisions that are taken in theological and philosophical questions after an examination of the different views. In a matter of dogma Shalom says "we have decided categorically" (*pasaghu be-hehlet*)<sup>38</sup> in opposition to someone who "decided" (*pasag a-din*)<sup>39</sup> differently. In philosophic contexts he once asks "why Gersonides saw fit to decide to the contrary?"<sup>40</sup> and elsewhere refers to someone who "had decided and pronounced his judgment."<sup>41</sup> Shalom's use of this legal term for stating the results of philosophic investigations indicates that like legal decisions they too have a normative function: they serve to establish a set of normative beliefs.<sup>42</sup>

*Shalom's method in his homilies.*—The proposed object of Shalom's homilies is to unveil the "wisdom" which is presumed to lie hidden within the miscellaneous dicta of the rabbis. In practice, though, Shalom does not restrict himself to rabbinic texts, but discourses on a large number of Biblical passages and upon some passages in the liturgy as well.<sup>43</sup> Underlying his interpretations is the assumption, characteristic of medieval philosophy in general,<sup>44</sup> that besides their literal meaning, the texts with which he deals also have a nonliteral or allegorical meaning. In justifying this principle Shalom cites Moses Maimonides, the main source of his philosophy, to the effect that in both Biblical and rabbinic literature "metaphorical terms are frequently employed."<sup>45</sup> Like Maimonides and others, he also cites the rabbinic rule that "scripture speaks according to the language of men";<sup>46</sup> this is taken to mean that scripture describes God in anthropomorphic terms only in order to make itself intelligible to man, but those terms do not represent the actual truth and therefore must not be taken literally. A set of clear criteria for applying the allegorical interpretation is not provided by Shalom. However, he does repeat the principle that no irrational verse may be allowed to stand: whenever a "scientific demonstration" (*mofet*) proves the opposite of what is stated in a Biblical verse, the literal sense is to be discarded and the verse understood in a nonliteral manner.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, it is clear that, in accord with the consensus of medieval philosophers, Shalom generally accepts the literal sense of any verse which he interprets allegorically, and completely rejects the literal meaning only in those cases in which the deity is described in anthropomorphic terms.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Cf. W. Bacher, *Die Bibel- und Traditionsexegese Terminologie der Amoräer* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 158.

<sup>38</sup> N. Sh. I, 16, 25b.

<sup>39</sup> N. Sh. I, 13, 21a.

<sup>40</sup> N. Sh. XI, 1, 190b.

<sup>41</sup> N. Sh. XII, 1, 2, 199a.

<sup>42</sup> For a similar legal term used by Shalom in the same way, see below nn. 65, 66.

<sup>43</sup> An incomplete index of the passages commented upon by Shalom lists 10 psalms, 184 other Biblical verses, 5 passages from the liturgy, and 167 passages from rabbinic literature. Cf. index at end of Venice edition.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. H. A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), I, 158-160.

<sup>45</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 86a: במקומות רבים והחכמים בדברי הנביאים יעשו המושאלים. Cf. M. N. introduction, p. 3b.

<sup>46</sup> N. Sh. XII, 1, 3, 200b. Cf. *Berakot* 31b and parallels; M. N. I, 26, 42a; W. Bacher, *Die Bibel-exegese der Jüdischen Religionsphilosophen des Mittelalters vor Maimuni* (Strasbourg, 1892), p. 72.

For the original meaning of the rule, which was far from being intended to justify the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, see Bacher, *Die Älteste Terminologie*, p. 98, n. 1.

<sup>47</sup> N. Sh. IV, 1, 52b, quoting M. N. II, 25, 51b. Cf. Saadia, *Emunot we-De'ot* (Jozefow, 1885), VII, 2, p. 165.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 159 f. Shalom repeats Maimonides' interpretation of such anthropomorphic terms as: *yashab* (N. Sh. I, 7, 8a; M. N. I, 11, 29a-b); *panim* (N. Sh. VI, 5, 93b; M. N. I, 24, 41a); *rakab*; and others. Terms interpreted by Shalom in a slightly different way include: *kabod* (N. Sh. I, 7, 6a; cf. M. N. I, 64), *niṣṣab* (N. Sh. VI, 1, 87b; cf. M. N. I, 15).

<sup>59</sup> Cf.

<sup>60</sup> N.

<sup>61</sup> N.

<sup>62</sup> N.

הדרוש

<sup>63</sup> N.

<sup>64</sup> N.

התור

<sup>65</sup> N.

<sup>66</sup> N.

Die . . . 2

<sup>67</sup> N.



Jewish authorities is correct, employing as a criterion the authority of Scripture and tradition.<sup>68</sup>

The supposition, one that is typical of medieval philosophy,<sup>69</sup> is that Scripture, being a divinely revealed document, is the most reliable, although not necessarily the only, source of human knowledge. The respective spheres of reason and revelation are defined by Shalom in terms of the religious doctrines which each is able to teach. Certain dogmas, he writes, are amenable to rational demonstration,<sup>70</sup> and for these there is added merit in learning the demonstration rather than merely accepting the testimony of Scripture.<sup>71</sup> The same thought is expressed when he describes "the intellect" and "the Torah" as separate ways to the knowledge of God, and requires that both of them be pursued.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, however, he maintains that at least two dogmas, the creation of the world and resurrection, are denied by philosophers and taught only by Scripture;<sup>73</sup> Scripture succeeds in teaching them because its "ways are more elevated" than merely "natural" intellectual processes, and therefore provide knowledge both of things which the intellect demonstrates, and also of things which the intellect cannot reach.<sup>74</sup> Shalom thus understands that there are two separate ways to knowledge: the lower way of the intellect, which produces knowledge of many, but not all, of the truths which man must know, and which should be followed as far as it goes; and the higher way of revelation,

<sup>68</sup> Shalom refers to this procedure in his introduction (p. iii) and when discussing creation (I, 1, 1b; I, 5, 4b), divine knowledge (III, 1, 43a), a question concerning prophecy (VI, 4, 92a), the nature of the human soul (VIII, 1, 120b), and divine attributes (XII, 1, 1, 199a).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 156-158.

<sup>70</sup> N. Sh. X, 2, 173b.

<sup>71</sup> N. Sh. XII, 1, 3, 201a on divine attributes. Cf. M. N. I, 59, 87a-b.

<sup>72</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 77a. Here Shalom adds rabbinic tradition as a third way; cf. O. H. introduction,

p. 135.

<sup>73</sup> N. Sh. XI, 6, 196b. On V, 13, 85a, Shalom calls resurrection the "essential difference" between adherents of the "divine Torah" and adherents of "other sciences."

<sup>74</sup> N. Sh. I, 13, 20a: *דרכי חקירת החכמה הם כפי מה שישערו השכל את אשר תשיג ידו מהחוש*. ומהטבע ודרכי התורה הם למעלה מהטבע.

Shalom's views concerning the beliefs which should be considered to be religious dogmas are related to the discussions of Maimonides, Crescas, and Albo (that is, Simon Duran); on the dogmas according to these writers cf. I. Husik, *History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 409-410; J. Guttman, *Die Philosophie des Judentums* (Munich, 1933), p. 260. Shalom's basic list contains four dogmas (*yesodot*): (a) the necessary existence of God, (b) divine retribution (*sakar wa-onesh*), (c) divine providence, and (d) the creation of the world. The list is given twice in precisely this way (II, 9, 37a; VIII, 11, 149b) and a third time with (e) divine omnipotence substituted for providence (II, 1, 29a). Of these, the existence of God and divine retribution are two separate dogmas in Crescas' enumeration (cf. Husik, *op. cit.*); and elsewhere Shalom makes a special point of characterizing creation as a dogma in opposition to both Crescas and Albo (cf. below, pp. 57, 63-64). In another passage Shalom enumerates five dogmas (*yesodot ve-iggarim*): (c), (d), (e) of the previous lists, and, in addition, (f) revelation, and (g) prophecy (X, 8, 186b); revelation is the third and remaining dogma in Albo's list, while prophecy appears in Crescas' list (cf. Husik, *History*, pp. 409-410). In other passages Shalom calls the belief in each of the following a dogma (*iggar*): (h) the Messiah (I, 3, 3b), (i) the compatibility of divine omniscience with human free will (III, 1, 43a), and, by implication, (j) resurrection (XI, 6, 196b; cf. above, n. 73). In yet another passage Shalom includes in a list of five "things" which he seems to consider to be dogmas without naming them as such: (k) the immutability of God, and (l) the eternity of the Torah (X, 3, 176a; the other three "things" are (d), (e), and (h) in the previous lists; the doctrine that the Torah existed before the creation of the world is stated by Shalom on X, 8, 186a). Considering that the necessary existence of God includes His unity, incorporeality, and eternity (cf. below, pp. 23-24), Shalom has enumerated all thirteen dogmas in Maimonides' list except for the fifth, the exclusive right of God to human worship, and the seventh, the preeminence of the prophecy of Moses (cf. Husik, *History*, p. 409). He has added the creation of the world, an addition justified in detail (cf. below, pp. 63-64); divine providence and omnipotence, both found in Crescas' list; and divine immutability.



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<sup>46</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 200b. Cf. *Berakot* 31b and parallels; M. N. I, 26, 42a; W. Bacher, *Die Bibel-exegese der jüdischen Religionsphilosophen des Mittelalters vor Maimuni* (Strasbourg, 1892), p. 72. For the original meaning of the rule, which was far from being intended to justify the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, see Bacher, *Die Älteste Terminologie*, p. 98, n. 1.

<sup>47</sup> N. Sh. IV, 1, 52b, quoting M. N. II, 25, 51b. Cf. Saadia, *Emunot we-De'ot* (Jozefow, 1885), VII, 2, p. 165.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 159 f. Shalom repeats Maimonides' interpretation of such anthropomorphic terms as: *yashab* (N. Sh. I, 7, 8a; M. N. I, 11, 29a-b); *panim* (N. Sh. VI, 5, 93b; M. N. I, 24, 41a); *rakab*; and others. Terms interpreted by Shalom in a slightly different way include: *kabod* (N. Sh. I, 7, 6a; cf. M. N. I, 64), *niṣṣab* (N. Sh. VI, 1, 87b; cf. M. N. I, 15).

A number of Shalom's interpretations are borrowed from Maimonides,<sup>49</sup> but he gives many more of his own, and, even when borrowing, expands his material.<sup>50</sup> In order to produce an extended homily, Shalom finds two devices useful. One, used by him when commenting upon long passages, consists in developing a thesis of his own, all of the points of which are then attached to successive verses in his text. This method has the advantage of allowing him to develop a connected argument. It enables him, for example, to transform one psalm into an exhortation for the study of philosophy. The first verse in the psalm is interpreted as stating that man must know certain fundamental truths if he is to perfect himself; then, the remaining verses are shown to allude to the following: the dependence of the existence of the world on a first cause; the creation of the world; the nature of the celestial spheres; the doctrine that human life is the object in the existence of the lower world; human free will; the elements in human perfection; the causes of human immortality; the difference between revealed truth and human knowledge; and the nature of certain parts of the physical world.<sup>51</sup>

Another device, used by Shalom when he is dealing with briefer passages, consists in listing the lessons which may be learned from the given text.<sup>52</sup> Such lists are necessarily disjointed but they allow Shalom to make large numbers of observations. A good illustration is provided by a homily in which he undertakes to explain nothing more than the "intention" of a rabbi who asserted that "it is permissible to initiate quarrels with wicked people."<sup>53</sup> The case of Mordecai, who antagonized Haman, immediately suggests itself.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, Shalom first explains the motives of Mordecai in refusing to bow down before Haman, of the king's servants in reporting Mordecai's behavior to Haman, and of the latter in his attempt to revenge himself upon the entire Jewish nation. Then the tradition that Haman was a scion of the royal family of Amalek<sup>55</sup> leads Shalom to consider that tribe's attack upon the Israelites.<sup>56</sup> He explains it as a result of Amalek's philosophy, which interpreted all human events as subject to the influence of the stars and accordingly denied divine providence. The baseness of Amalek leads Shalom to further digressions upon the baseness of the murderers of Ishbosheth<sup>57</sup> and upon Saul's sin in hesitating to execute the Amalekite king.<sup>58</sup> At this point Shalom returns to his original subject and explains Mordecai's refusal to bow down before Haman as due to the consideration that the latter embodied the official astrological beliefs of his tribe. But here the mention of astrological beliefs leads to a new digression, now upon Abraham and Moses who,

<sup>49</sup> Cf. previous note. Interpretations with a philosophic relevance which are borrowed by Shalom from Maimonides include the following: N. Sh. I, 7, 6b, following M. N. I, 55, 82a, on Isa. 40: 25; N. Sh. V, 8, 79b, following M. N. I, 54, 80b, on Exod. 34: 6-7; N. Sh. XII, i, 1, 198b, following M. N. I, 59, 89a, on *Berakot* 33a; N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 202a-203a, following M. N. I, 61, 91b-92a, on the tetragrammaton (all of these passages bear on the problem of divine attributes); N. Sh. VI, 18, 97b, following M. N. II, 6, 22b-23a, on angels; N. Sh. VII, i, 7, 104b, following M. N. II, 12, 29b, interpreting Jer. 2: 13, in connection with the philosophic theory of emanation.

<sup>50</sup> Maimonides merely stated that Jacob's dream (Gen. 28: 12) contains seven significant elements (M. N. introduction, pp. 8a-b). Shalom not only interprets these seven elements, but discovers and interprets two more (N. Sh. VI, 1, 87a-b). Another illustration is to be found in N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 204b.

<sup>51</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 2, 99a-100a, on Ps. 24.

<sup>52</sup> In this, his method is not dissimilar to that of Gersonides' Bible commentaries.

<sup>53</sup> *Berakot* 7b.

<sup>54</sup> Esther 3: 2-6.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Targumim on Esther 3: 1.

<sup>56</sup> Exod. 17: 8.

<sup>57</sup> II Sam. 4: 5-7.

<sup>58</sup> I Sam. 15: 9.



Shalom understands, opposed such beliefs and the star worship based upon them.<sup>59</sup> Finally, Shalom concludes by explaining parts of the liturgy for the Purim holiday. This homily, which extends over eight pages, contains the following enumerations: eight reasons by which Haman justified the destruction of the Jews to Ahasuerus; two reasons for Moses' anxiety before the battle with Amalek; two reasons for the choice of Joshua to lead the Israelites in battle; five features of an "absolute" or total enemy; three considerations which led David to punish the murderers of Ishbosheth; three factors in Haman's sudden rise to power; two errors made by those who believe that the heavenly bodies rule the universe; and six arguments in a certain prayer of Moses in behalf of the people of Israel. All of these items are supported by proof texts drawn from the Bible, rabbinic literature, and Shalom's predecessors among the medieval writers. And they are all assumed to be implied in the single statement that "it is permissible to initiate quarrels with wicked people."<sup>60</sup>

Homilies of these types become the medium whereby Shalom makes hundreds of statements on ethical, religious, historical, and philosophic matters. Such statements tend to be incomplete and unsystematic. However, the disadvantage is somewhat reduced by Shalom's prolixity, which leads him repeatedly to return to any subject that interests him, and thus supply sufficient material for reconstructing his views. For a study of Shalom's philosophy, statements made in homiletic contexts are the only source for determining his position on a number of topics which he does not treat formally; these are: the proofs of the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God; the structure of the universe; divine providence; human knowledge; and human ethics. In addition, these statements are useful even when considering the topics which he does discuss formally; for since his formal treatment usually consists solely in answering the various objections raised by his opponents, some points are neglected in favor of others, and the added data provided by the homilies are helpful. Approximately half the material for the present study of Shalom's philosophy was drawn from homiletic contexts.

*The character of the philosophic inquiries in Neweh Shalom.*—Shalom's formal philosophic discussions, as has been noted, appear as digressions in the general homiletic framework of his book. What he defines as his "customary procedure" (*minhagenu*)<sup>61</sup> for these sections contains two steps. First he "lays down the views" of his "predecessors"<sup>62</sup> among the "later" (*aḥaronim*)<sup>63</sup> Jewish philosophers, the non-Jewish philosophers being excluded from consideration since they were not "impelled . . . to believe what the adherent of the Torah believes."<sup>64</sup> Then he "decides" (*nakri'a*,<sup>65</sup> *makri'a*<sup>66</sup>) which of the views found in his Jewish sources is "correct according to scripture and [rabbinic] tradition."<sup>67</sup> His procedure, in other words, consists in determining which of his

<sup>59</sup> Cf. M. N. III, 29-30.

<sup>60</sup> N. Sh. V, 6, 68b-72b; cf. above, n. 53.

<sup>61</sup> N. Sh. VI, 4, 92a (cf. below, n. 67); VIII, 1, 120b (cf. next note).

<sup>62</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 1, 120b: . . . סדור התורה לפי דעות הקודמים באלו החקירות ובכריע הדעת הנאות לפי סדור התורה . . .

כמנהגנו בשאר הדיושים

<sup>63</sup> N. Sh. I, 5, 4b.

<sup>64</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 43a: לא נחוש עתה להביא דעות הפילוסוף ולהתוכח עמו מפני שלא לחצתהו אמונה . . . להאמין מה שיאמינהו התוריי

<sup>65</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 1, 120b; cf. above, n. 62.

<sup>66</sup> N. Sh. VI, 5, 92b. This is a halakic term, similar in meaning to *pasaq* above, pp. 4-5 (cf. Bacher, *Die . . . Terminologie der Amoräer*, p. 90).

<sup>67</sup> N. Sh. VI, 4, 92a: אם כן ראוי לנו לעיין אי זה מהם יכשר לפי התורה והקבלה כמנהגנו

The supposition, one that is typical of medieval philosophy,<sup>68</sup> is that Scripture, being a divinely revealed document, is the most reliable, although not necessarily the only, source of human knowledge. The respective spheres of reason and revelation are defined by Shalom in terms of the religious doctrines which each is able to teach. Certain dogmas, he writes, are amenable to rational demonstration,<sup>70</sup> and for these there is added merit in learning the demonstration rather than merely accepting the testimony of Scripture.<sup>71</sup> The same thought is expressed when he describes "the intellect" and "the Torah" as separate ways to the knowledge of God, and requires that both of them be pursued.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, however, he maintains that at least two dogmas, the creation of the world and resurrection, are denied by philosophers and taught only by Scripture;<sup>73</sup> Scripture succeeds in teaching them because its "ways are more elevated" than merely "natural" intellectual processes, and therefore provide knowledge both of things which the intellect demonstrates, and also of things which the intellect cannot reach.<sup>74</sup> Shalom thus understands that there are two separate ways to knowledge: the lower way of the intellect, which produces knowledge of many, but not all, of the truths which man must know, and which should be followed as far as it goes; and the higher way of revelation,

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 156-158.

<sup>70</sup> N. Sh. X, 2, 173b.

<sup>71</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 201a on divine attributes. Cf. M. N. I, 59, 87a-b.

<sup>73</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 77a. Here Shalom adds rabbinic tradition as a third way; cf. O. H. introduction, p. 135.

<sup>73</sup> N. Sh. XI, 6, 196b. On V, 13, 85a, Shalom calls resurrection the "essential difference" between adherents of the "divine Torah" and adherents of "other sciences."

<sup>74</sup>N. Sh. I, 13, 20a: מהחוש ידו מהחכמה הם כפי מה שישערהו השכל את אשר תשיג ידו מהחוש ודרכי התורה הם למעלה מהטבע.

Shalom's views concerning the beliefs which should be considered to be religious dogmas are related to the discussions of Maimonides, Crescas, and Albo (that is, Simon Duran); on the dogmas according to these writers cf. I. Husik, *History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 409-410; J. Guttman, *Die Philosophie des Judentums* (Munich, 1933), p. 260. Shalom's basic list contains four dogmas (*yesodot*): (a) the necessary existence of God, (b) divine retribution (*sakar wa-'onesh*), (c) divine providence, and (d) the creation of the world. The list is given twice in precisely this way (II, 9, 37a; VIII, 11, 149b) and a third time with (e) divine omnipotence substituted for providence (II, 1, 29a). Of these, the existence of God and divine retribution are two of three dogmas (*'iqqarim*) enumerated by Albo, while providence and omnipotence are listed as separate dogmas in Crescas' enumeration (cf. Husik, *op. cit.*); and elsewhere Shalom makes a special point of characterizing creation as a dogma in opposition to both Crescas and Albo (cf. below, pp. 57, 63-64). In another passage Shalom enumerates five dogmas (*yesodot we-'iqqarim*): (c), (d), (e) of the previous lists, and, in addition, (f) revelation, and (g) prophecy (X, 8, 186b); revelation is the third and remaining dogma in Albo's list, while prophecy appears in Crescas' list (cf. Husik, *History*, pp. 409-410). In other passages Shalom calls the belief in each of the following a dogma (*'iqqar*): (h) the Messiah (I, 3, 3b), (i) the compatibility of divine omniscience with human free will (II, 1, 43a), and, by implication, (j) resurrection (XI, 6, 196b; cf. above, n. 73). In yet another passage Shalom includes in a list of five "things" which he seems to consider to be dogmas without naming them as such: (k) the immutability of God, and (l) the eternity of the Torah (X, 3, 176a; the other three "things" are (d), (e), and (h) in the previous lists; the doctrine that the Torah existed before the creation of the world is stated by Shalom on X, 8, 186a). Considering that the necessary existence of God includes His unity, incorporeality, and eternity (cf. below, pp. 23-24), Shalom has enumerated all thirteen dogmas in Maimonides' list except for the fifth, the exclusive right of God to human worship, and the seventh, the preëminence of the prophecy of Moses (cf. Husik, *History*, p. 409). He has added the creation of the world, an addition justified in detail (cf. below, pp. 63-64); divine providence and omnipotence, both found in Crescas' list; and divine immutability.



which teaches both those truths that can be demonstrated by the intellect and others which cannot be so demonstrated. As for the actual process whereby scientific knowledge is to be deduced from Scripture, Shalom apparently conceived of some system of philosophic hermeneutics paralleling the Talmudic legal and haggadic hermeneutics. He speaks, for example, of a general set of "rules" (*middot*)<sup>75</sup> for extracting the doctrines of scripture, and also calls one such rule the "Torah syllogism" (*heqqesh toriyyi*).<sup>76</sup> It is most unlikely, however, that he actually worked out the suggested system. In practice he never goes beyond contending that both the legal and narrative parts of Scripture imply such general doctrines as the power of God to perform miracles, divine knowledge and providence, the appointment of prophets, and the like.<sup>77</sup>

The Jewish philosophers whose views Shalom invariably undertakes to examine—employing, as he explained, the criteria of scripture—are Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), Levi Gersonides (1288-1344), and Hasdai Crescas (1340-1410). For several reasons, the first of the three is to be considered the central figure of the entire history of medieval Jewish philosophy. Chronologically, he was active about the middle of the period during which the study of philosophy interested the medieval Jews. More significantly, his time was one when Jewish thought was undergoing a decisive transformation by the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy in its Arabic version. The most important factor in bringing about that transformation was Maimonides' own *Guide for the Perplexed*, which then became the most widely read philosophic work among the Jews, not only for those who agreed with Maimonides, but also for the schools of thought which opposed him.<sup>78</sup> With the growth of these opposing schools, Maimonides was placed in a central position in a further sense. His harmonization of the Arabic-Aristotelian philosophy with traditional Jewish beliefs came to occupy a middle ground between what might be called more conservative and more radical positions. And he was the object of criticism from both sides. On the one hand, he was criticized for not having gone far enough and failing to take the correct philosophic position because of religious considerations. On the other hand, he was criticized for having gone too far in frequently following Aristotelian philosophy instead of Jewish tradition. Gersonides and Crescas were, respectively, the outstanding representatives of the two types of criticism. It is not surprising, therefore, that once Shalom decided to examine the views of his predecessors on various philosophic questions, he was led to treat first Maimonides, the outstanding Jewish philosopher, and then Gersonides and Crescas, the prime representatives of two main schools of opposition. The analysis of just these three would also have been recommended by Crescas' habit of discussing the views of Maimonides and Gersonides on any given problem before presenting his own view, thus facilitating the comparison of the three with one another.

Shalom expresses his regard for all three. He calls Gersonides a "great philosopher" (*hakam gadol*),<sup>79</sup> and to Crescas he applies the verse: "The words of a wise man's mouth

<sup>75</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 6, 135a.

<sup>76</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 89b; cf. below, pp. 100-101. The term *heqqesh* has a different sense in rabbinic literature; cf. Bacher, *Die Älteste Terminologie*, pp. 44-46.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. below, pp. 63-64, 68-69, 101.

<sup>78</sup> One index of the popularity of the *Guide* is provided by the number of commentaries on it; cf. the list assembled by M. Steinschneider, "Die hebräischen Commentare zum Führer des Maimonides," *Festschrift zum siebenzigsten Geburtstage A. Berliner's* (Frankfort, 1903), pp. 349-363.

<sup>79</sup> N. Sh. XI, 1, 190a.

are gracious."<sup>80</sup> It is Maimonides, however, who commands Shalom's highest respect. All of the words of Maimonides, he writes, are "pure, free of the dross of confusion,"<sup>81</sup> and, consequently, in all religious matters the rule to be followed is that "Moses [Maimonides] is true and his *torah* is true."<sup>82</sup>

Because of his attitude toward Maimonides, Shalom's actual procedure is not the same as that which he originally outlined.<sup>83</sup> Instead of arbitrating among the views of his predecessors, he, in effect, does little more than defend Maimonides' position against the objections of Gersonides and Crescas. His discussions consequently acquire a distinctly polemic and dialectic cast, the polemic spirit carrying him so far that he even undertakes to refute Crescas' objections to Gersonides' views, merely in order to be able to draw up his own critique of the latter.<sup>84</sup>

The methods which Shalom employs are such as suit his concept of philosophy and its object. His argumentation is very mechanical, its main function being merely to provide some consideration which will counterbalance each contention of the opponent. As a result Shalom may misunderstand his opponent's argument,<sup>85</sup> or note only a formal flaw,<sup>86</sup> or simply reiterate Maimonides' position without attempting to understand the objection which he is answering.<sup>87</sup> When dealing with the objections raised by Crescas against Gersonides, Shalom in at least two cases vigorously refutes Crescas' contention, only to employ it himself when presenting his own critique of Gersonides.<sup>88</sup>

Another characteristic of Shalom's method is his frequent attempt to reconcile apparently opposing views. Attempts at harmonization, which are not unusual in medieval philosophy, are forced upon him by his recognition of different authorities, which occasionally disagree with one another, or with a position which he feels called upon to adopt for other reasons. Thus he is sometimes led into difficulty by his assumption that Maimonides' authority is supreme in all questions, for there are, in fact, cases where he feels that religious considerations demand a different position from that which Maimonides had apparently held. His solution to the dilemma consists in showing that Maimonides' statements should not be taken in their obvious sense. As a result he produces what we should consider to be very forced interpretations of certain of Maimonides' statements in order to harmonize them with his own views.<sup>89</sup> Another problem arises when Shalom encounters theories of Gersonides which he considers to be completely unacceptable for religious reasons. While, in general, he does not hesitate to oppose Gersonides, he will not allow himself to go to the extent of casting suspicion on the very orthodoxy of so eminent a philosopher. Therefore, following, as he says, the rabbinic injunction to grant every suspected person a presumption of innocence, he reinterprets Gersonides' statements and brings them into accord with what he considers to be the correct, religious position.<sup>90</sup> Other attempts at harmonization are induced when Shalom discovers that

<sup>80</sup> N. Sh. II, 7, 33b; cf. Eccles. 10: 12.

<sup>81</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 44b: *טהורות בקיות מטיג השבוש*; cf. Ps. 12: 7. A similar remark is made on VIII, 3, 123b.

<sup>82</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 21a: *אמת ותורתו משה אמת*; cf. Mal. 2: 6.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. above, pp. 7-8.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. below, p. 55.

<sup>85</sup> As N. Sh. I, 13, 20a.

<sup>86</sup> N. Sh. I, 6, 5a-b.

<sup>87</sup> N. Sh. XII, 1, 3, 200b.

<sup>88</sup> Compare N. Sh. I, 12, 18a, with I, 13, 19b; cf. below p. 68.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. below, pp. 64, 76, 81, 82-84.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. N. Sh. V, 1, 88a, playing on *Abot* I, 6.



Maimonides and Gersonides were at variance on certain minor problems. When the issues are relatively unimportant, he prefers to devise a way of retaining both authorities rather than to judge between them. Accordingly, he draws a scholastic distinction which allows him to explain Maimonides' statement as referring to one aspect of the matter in question, and Gersonides' statement as referring to another aspect.<sup>91</sup> An additional, and perhaps more interesting type of combination appears when he joins into a single scheme, not the views of two Jewish philosophers, but what he considers to be the consensus of philosophers on the one hand and of religious tradition on the other. For example, having credited both a philosophic and religious theory of the immortality of the soul, he explains that the philosophers had described a lesser type of immortality, in fact just the type which they themselves will enjoy, while Jewish tradition had described a higher type, again, in fact, just the type that will be enjoyed by those who follow the teachings of scripture.<sup>92</sup>

A further feature of *Neweh Shalom* is the adoption, in different passages, of inconsistent positions on the same question. This imprecision is due to the fact that Shalom does not attach equal importance to all of the topics which he discusses. There are just a few topics which are fundamentally significant for him because of their religious implications, and when dealing with those he is careful to state a definitive and consistent position. However, the various technical philosophic problems upon which he touches concern him less, and he does not always exercise the same care with them. As a result he sometimes states views which he later describes as improbable or which he even contradicts.<sup>93</sup>

In general, it is clear that the philosophic sections in *Neweh Shalom*, like the homiletic sections, have a strong apologetic motif: they are designed less to discover new truths than to defend first the doctrines of the Jewish religion, as Shalom understands them, and then the philosophic positions of Maimonides. The methods of argumentation which Shalom employs in these sections are such as are appropriate to that end.

*The term qabbalah in Neweh Shalom.*—Shalom's citation of several works of a cabalistic nature<sup>94</sup> requires us to assess this element in his thought, and the best approach to the problem is to consider his use of the term *qabbalah*, which basically meant nothing more than "received or accepted tradition." (a) When classifying the possible ways of performing religious rites, he uses the term *qabbalah* to designate the lowest way, which consists merely in blind acceptance. The "depository of tradition" or "traditionalist" (*mequbbal*) in this sense is the person who performs the acts which he has been taught without considering their significance, and such thoughtless "tradition" or "acceptance" (*qabbalah*) is described as something to be avoided.<sup>95</sup> (b) Elsewhere, Shalom uses the term in the precise sense of rabbinic tradition as it is recorded in the Talmud, and this he calls "true tradition" (*qabbalah amittit*).<sup>96</sup> (c) Again, he uses the term to designate a certain discipline by which he supposes that all knowledge, including all human sciences (*kol ha-ḥokmot*), can be deduced from revealed scripture. He calls this discipline "the science of tradition" (*ḥokmat ha-qabbalah*) and describes it as the highest branch of the

<sup>91</sup> Cf. below, pp. 64-65; 87, n. 85.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. below, pp. 86-88, 92.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. below, pp. 32-33, 44, 48-49, 50, 90, 97.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. nn. 147, 164, 169, 173, and 174.

<sup>95</sup> N. Sh. II, 10, 41a.

<sup>96</sup> N. Sh. I, 1, 1a.

study of scripture, paralleling metaphysics, which is the highest branch of philosophy.<sup>97</sup> (d) Finally, certain conceptions of a definitely mystical, or rather theosophic, nature, the doctrine of the cabala (*qabbalah*) in the strict sense, are cited as the "tradition" of the "traditionalists" (*mequbbalim*).<sup>98</sup>

These illustrations show that Shalom is far from using *qabbalah* as a technical term for strictly theosophic doctrines, for he employs it both pejoratively and approvingly. Further, even in the latter sense the term is employed rather broadly; it includes the entire body of Jewish lore, which is supposed to have been handed down from the time of Moses,<sup>99</sup> and it contains rabbinic and philosophic, as well as theosophic, elements. The assumption underlying Shalom's usage is that rabbinic tradition, human science and philosophy, and cabala in the strict sense are three parts of one harmonious whole among which no conflict is possible. We may presume that he gave some thought to the general problem of harmonizing philosophy with the cabala, since among the works which he cites there are two by cabalistic writers who had undertaken to prove that there is no contradiction between the two spheres of thought.<sup>100</sup>

The only doctrines of the cabala, in the strict sense, which Shalom cites are the basic tenets of the so-called theoretical and practical cabala. The first, referred to in a number of passages, is the theory of the ten *sefirot*, which were held to constitute the first stage of emanation from the deity. The precise nature of these *sefirot* had been debated,<sup>101</sup> and Shalom's statements indicate the position which he took concerning them. He asserts that the *sefirot* are not a part of the deity or manifestations of His essence, but distinct emanated beings;<sup>102</sup> that they are, in fact, identical with the ten celestial intelligences described by the philosophers (*hakme ha-mehqar*),<sup>103</sup> and that, consequently, for the difference of opinion among the philosophers as to whether the deity should be understood to be the first of the intelligences, or should be placed above them,<sup>104</sup> there is an exact parallel among the adherents of the cabala.<sup>105</sup> A theory according to which there are not ten, but thirteen, *sefirot* is also mentioned by Shalom, but is not identified.<sup>106</sup>

The other cabalistic doctrine to which Shalom refers concerns the possibility of thaumaturgical feats being performed by means of amulets and the reciting of divine names. Not only does Shalom credit these feats, he even attempts to rationalize them by reference to current theories concerning the wondrous properties (*segulot*) of certain plants and stones.<sup>107</sup> Most of his references to cabalistic works occur in connection with this practical part of the cabala.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>97</sup> N. Sh. V, 5, 66a; 68b.

<sup>98</sup> N. Sh. VI, 8, 97b; VII, 4, 128a.

<sup>99</sup> N. Sh. V, 5, 66a.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. nn. 164 and 169. On Abulafia's view, see G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*<sup>3</sup> (New York, 1954), p. 126. On Ibn Wakar's attempt to harmonize philosophy with cabala, see Scholem, *Qiryat Sefer*, XX (1943-1944), 158.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. G. Scholem in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, IX, cols. 674-677.

<sup>102</sup> N. Sh. V, 11, 81b. For the different views on the question, cf. Scholem, *loc. cit.*

<sup>103</sup> N. Sh. V, 11, 81b; VIII, 4, 128a. This apparently was the view of Ibn Wakar; cf. Scholem, *Qiryat Sefer*, XX, 158, and Shem Tob Ibn Shem Tob, *Sefer ha-Emunot* (Ferrara, 1556), IV, 5, 29a, where Ibn Wakar's position is cited and attacked.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. below, pp. 48-49.

<sup>105</sup> N. Sh. V, 11, 81b. Cf. Scholem, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, IX, cols. 675-676.

<sup>106</sup> N. Sh. VI, 8, 97b; on thirteen *sefirot*, cf. G. Scholem, *Reshit ha-Qabbalah* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1948), pp. 171-174.

<sup>107</sup> N. Sh. V, 4, 64b-5, 68b.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. nn. 164, 169, 173, and 174.



Considering the degree to which the cabala is outweighed by the philosophic element in *Neweh Shalom*, it must be accounted a relatively minor theme in Shalom's thought. What is especially noteworthy is his attitude toward it: he feels able to accept the truth of the cabala and yet concentrate his attention on philosophy, on the supposition that the two provide complementary and equally true descriptions of the universe.

*Shalom's sources.*—Shalom's attitude of respect for authority leads him to employ a large number of literary sources. In the homiletic sections of his work, his references are most frequently to the Bible and the Babylonian Talmud, but occasionally also to the Midrashim, the Targumim, and the liturgy.<sup>109</sup> In the philosophic sections, his most important sources, as has been noted, are Maimonides, Gersonides, and Crescas. Of the writings of the first of these, he cites: *Guide for the Perplexed*,<sup>110</sup> *Mishneh Torah*,<sup>111</sup> commentary on the *Mishnah*, Sanhedrin XI (X);<sup>112</sup> *Shemonah Peraqim*,<sup>113</sup> once cited as *Perush la-Middot ha-Nibharot*,<sup>114</sup> several letters;<sup>115</sup> the medical aphorisms, *Pirke Mosheh*,<sup>116</sup> and an attributed work, *Sefer ha-Mafteah*.<sup>117</sup> The works of Gersonides which he cites are: *Milhamot ha-Shem*,<sup>118</sup> supercommentary on Averroes' middle commentary on the *Physics*,<sup>119</sup> and commentary on the Pentateuch.<sup>120</sup> The only work of Crescas which he cites is *Or ha-Shem*.<sup>121</sup>

Virtually the entire Aristotelian corpus is cited by Shalom, always, we may presume, through the medium of Averroes' commentaries.<sup>122</sup> His references are to the following: *De Interpretatione*,<sup>123</sup> *Prior Analytics*,<sup>124</sup> *Posterior Analytics*,<sup>125</sup> *Rhetoric*,<sup>126</sup> *Physics*,<sup>127</sup> *De Caelo*,<sup>128</sup> *Meteorologica*,<sup>129</sup> the so-called *Animalia* (*Ba'ale Hayyim*),<sup>130</sup> which included

<sup>109</sup> Cf. above, n. 43.

<sup>110</sup> Cited frequently.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. below, p. 18. (The references in this and the following notes will not be exhaustive.)

<sup>112</sup> N. Sh. XI, 8, 198a.

<sup>113</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 2, 121b.

<sup>114</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 4, 126b; cf. M. Steinschneider "Aus Handschriften, VI," *Israelitische Letterbode* VIII (1882-1883), 61.

<sup>115</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 125a; XI, 5, 195b; XI, 8, 198a.

<sup>116</sup> N. Sh. V, 10, 80b.

<sup>117</sup> N. Sh. XI, 5, 194a; cf. M. Steinschneider, *Die Arabische Literatur der Juden* (Berlin, 1902), p. 218.

<sup>118</sup> Cited frequently.

<sup>119</sup> N. Sh. I, 11, 17b.

<sup>120</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 146a.

<sup>121</sup> Cited frequently.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, pp. 51 and 465, n. 23. Where the commentaries of Averroes are available it is possible to show that Shalom does not distinguish them from the original Aristotelian texts. On VIII, 6, 133b, for example, he quotes the "philosopher's" *De Generatione et Corruptione*, his citation being verbatim from Averroes' *Middle Commentary*, edited by S. Kurland (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 87, line 95-p. 88, line 7. Another passage which Shalom also cites from "the philosopher" is in fact taken from Averroes' *Middle Commentary* on *De Anima*; cf. below, Chap. VII, n. 46. When Shalom quotes a dispute between Aristotle and Galen that is recorded in *De Generatione Animalium* (*Sefer Ba'ale Hayyim* XV; see below, n. 131), it is also clear that he is quoting from Averroes' commentary (N. Sh. XIII, 3, 212b).

<sup>123</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 114a.

<sup>124</sup> N. Sh. I, 9, 10b.

<sup>125</sup> N. Sh. I, 12, 19a.

<sup>126</sup> N. Sh. IX, 1, 151a.

<sup>127</sup> N. Sh. I, 11, 17a.

<sup>128</sup> N. Sh. IX, 1, 154a.

<sup>129</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 6, 134a.

<sup>130</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 73a; XIII, 3, 212b.



*Historia Animalium*, *De Partibus Animalium*, and *De Generatione Animalium*,<sup>131</sup> *De Anima*,<sup>132</sup> *Parva Naturalia*,<sup>133</sup> *Metaphysics*,<sup>134</sup> *Ethics*.<sup>135</sup>

Having adopted the practice of citing Aristotle through Averroes' commentaries, Shalom does not recognize and cite those commentaries as such.<sup>136</sup> However, he does cite other works of Averroes: the medical treatise *Kulliyat fi al-Ṭibb*,<sup>137</sup> *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*,<sup>138</sup> *Quaestiones in Physica*,<sup>139</sup> *Ma'amar Efsharut ha-Debequt*.<sup>140</sup>

The other non-Jewish works cited by Shalom are: *Centiloquium*, astrological aphorisms attributed to Ptolemy;<sup>141</sup> Galen's *Hygiene*,<sup>142</sup> Alfarabi's *Kitab al-Siyāsāt al-Madaniyyah* (*Sefer ha-Haṭhalot*),<sup>143</sup> Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*,<sup>144</sup> Algazali's *Mozene ha-Iyyunim*,<sup>145</sup> Albertus Magnus' *Philosophia Pauperum*.<sup>146</sup>

The remaining Jewish writers and works referred to by Shalom are: *Sefer Yeṣirah*,<sup>147</sup> Isaac Israeli's *Sefer ha-Yesodot*,<sup>148</sup> a responsum of R. Sherira Gaon,<sup>149</sup> R. Ḥananeel,<sup>150</sup> the 'Aruk of Nathan ben Jehiel,<sup>151</sup> Rashi's commentary on the Talmud,<sup>152</sup> the *Cuzari* of Judah Hallevi,<sup>153</sup> an unidentified passage apparently taken from Moses Ibn Ezra's 'Arugat ha-Bosem,<sup>154</sup> Abraham Ibn Ezra's commentary on the Pentateuch,<sup>155</sup> and *Yesod Mora*,<sup>156</sup> David Kimḥi's commentary on the Bible,<sup>157</sup> *Ruah Ḥen*,<sup>158</sup> Alfakar,<sup>159</sup> the following works of Naḥmanides, whom Shalom considers to be an authority almost equal

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 143.

<sup>132</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 143a.

<sup>133</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 88a; IX, 9, 169b.

<sup>134</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 75a.

<sup>135</sup> N. Sh. I, 3, 2a.

<sup>136</sup> His only reference to Averroes' commentaries is N. Sh. VII, ii, 2, 108b, where he is quoting M. H. V, iii, 1, 221-222. Steinschneider was misled here; cf. *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 465, n. 23.

<sup>137</sup> N. Sh. V, 3, 63b.

<sup>138</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 1, 58b.

<sup>139</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 3, 100b.

<sup>140</sup> N. Sh. V, 8, 78b; cf. below, p. 81, n. 24; p. 88.

<sup>141</sup> N. Sh. VI, 7, 96a; cf. Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 527.

<sup>142</sup> N. Sh. V, 12, 82b; cf. Steinschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 655.

<sup>143</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 8, 141a.

<sup>144</sup> N. Sh. V, 12, 82a. Also cf. below, p. 78, n. 1.

<sup>145</sup> N. Sh. IV, 3, 56a, attributes it to Algazali; N. Sh. V, 5, 68b, attributes it to Averroes. Cf. Steinschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>146</sup> See above, n. 4.

<sup>147</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 73b.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> N. Sh. V, 4, 66b.

<sup>150</sup> N. Sh. X, 7, 182a. Shalom cites the interpretation of a Biblical verse, presumably from the Bible commentary of R. Ḥananeel ben Ḥushiel.

<sup>151</sup> N. Sh. VII, 1, 99a.

<sup>152</sup> N. Sh. III, 1, 42a.

<sup>153</sup> N. Sh. I, 16, 26b.

<sup>154</sup> On N. Sh. V, 7, 73b, he cites a statement of "Hermes the philosopher" which is a literal parallel of a statement of "Hermes the philosopher" in the Hebrew translation of *Al-Ḥadiqah fi Ma'ni al-Majaz wal-Ḥaqīqah*, known as 'Arugat ha-Bosem; cf. extract by L. Dukes, *Ṣiyyon II* (1841-1842), 123.

<sup>155</sup> N. Sh. V, 6, 72a; XI, 1, 190b.

<sup>156</sup> This work is not cited by name, but is quoted verbatim; cf. below, p. 100, n. 80.

<sup>157</sup> N. Sh. IX, 1, 152a.

<sup>158</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 124a.

<sup>159</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 5, 132b (אלכאר); the context is not perfectly clear but Shalom seems to be quoting from a criticism of Maimonides. If so, the reference may be to one of the letters of Judah Alfakar (cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v.).



to Maimonides:<sup>160</sup> commentary on the Pentateuch,<sup>161</sup> *Sha'ar ha-Gemul*,<sup>162</sup> and an attributed treatise, *Shulhan shel Arba'*,<sup>163</sup> Abraham Abulafia's *Or ha-Sekel*,<sup>164</sup> Isaac Albalag's commentary on Algazali's *Maqāsid al-Falāsifah*,<sup>165</sup> Jedaiah Bedersi's letter to Solomon Adret, entitled *Ketab ha-Hitnaşşelut*,<sup>166</sup> *Sefer ha-Zikkaron* of Yom Ṭob ben Abraham Ishbili (Riṭba),<sup>167</sup> Moses Narboni's commentary on the *Guide*,<sup>168</sup> *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* of Joseph Ibn Wakar,<sup>169</sup> R. Nissim,<sup>170</sup> Joseph Albo's *Sefer ha-Iqqarim*,<sup>171</sup> *Mar'ot Elohim* by Enoch of Constantinople.<sup>172</sup> Unidentified books mentioned by Shalom are: *Sefer ha-Orah*,<sup>173</sup> *Sefer ha-Te'amim*,<sup>174</sup> and *Sefer ha-Ṭallisma'ot*.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Shalom refers to Nahmanides and Maimonides as the "two lights" (*me'orot*, IX, 3, 156b) and as the "great ones of this world" (*gedole 'olam*, XI, 8, 198a), but on one question where he finds them in conflict he decides in favor of Maimonides (XI, 8). For his use of Nahmanides as an authority, cf. below, p. 87; N. Sh. VIII, 9, 146a; XI, 5, 194a.

<sup>161</sup> N. Sh. I, 15, 22b; IX, 1, 154b.

<sup>162</sup> N. Sh. XI, 5, 194a.

<sup>163</sup> N. Sh. XI, 8, 198a. Modern scholars attribute this work to Bahya b. Asher; cf. M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berlin, 1852-1860), col. 779; I. Benjacob, *Oşar ha-Sefarim* (Vilna, 1880), *shin*, no. 690.

<sup>164</sup> N. Sh. V, 4, 64b.

<sup>165</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 22a.

<sup>166</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 117b; VIII, 3, 125a. This apology for the study of philosophy is also called *Iggeret Hitnaşşelut*.

<sup>167</sup> N. Sh. IX, 3, 156b. Cf. Benjacob, *Oşar ha-Sefarim*, *zayin*, no. 125.

<sup>168</sup> N. Sh. I, 8, 8b, *et passim* (disapprovingly); V, 4, 65a (approvingly).

<sup>169</sup> N. Sh. V, 4, 65a. G. Scholem has traced Shalom's citation to Ibn Wakar's magnum opus; cf. *Qiryat Sefer*, XX, 159; concerning the original title of the book see *ibid.*, 153-154.

<sup>170</sup> N. Sh. II, 1, 29b. This reference, which contains a philosophic interpretation of the significance of phylacteries, may be to the philosophic Bible commentary of Nissim b. Moses of Marseilles.

<sup>171</sup> N. Sh. I, 16, 25b.

<sup>172</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 88b.

<sup>173</sup> N. Sh. V, 5, 66b-67a. The context indicates a work of cabalistic nature, which could be any one of the books of this name produced by Judah he-Hasid, Joseph Gikatilla, and Moses de Leon. Cf. Benjacob, *Oşar ha-Sefarim*, *alef*, nos. 568, 570, 571.

<sup>174</sup> N. Sh. V, 5, 68b. This may be the work with this title reported to have been written by Judah he-Hasid; cf. Benjacob, *Oşar ha-Sefarim*, *tet*, no. 125.

<sup>175</sup> N. Sh. V, 4, 66a. M. N. III, 29, 43b, which mentions a book with this title, is probably Shalom's source. For another citation, see M. Steinschneider, *Jewish Literature* (London, 1857), p. 371.

## CHAPTER II

# THE EXISTENCE, UNITY, AND INCORPOREALITY OF GOD

A LARGE PART of Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* deals with what Maimonides called "three important and serious questions,"<sup>1</sup> the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God.<sup>2</sup> Shalom does not quote this expression from Maimonides, but probably has it in mind when he lists "four dogmas":<sup>3</sup> that God is "one, necessarily existent, eternal, and incorporeal."<sup>4</sup> Maimonides' discussion of these questions or dogmas culminated in a set of philosophic proofs. He presented four proofs of the existence of God, and then both corollary and independent proofs of divine unity and incorporeality. In Shalom there is no systematic demonstration of these three or, with his addition, four dogmas. But frequently, especially in the course of his homilies, Shalom alludes to Maimonides' proofs. For example, when commenting upon the verse, "The heavens declare the glory of God,"<sup>5</sup> he is led to cite a proof of the existence of God from the movement of the heavens.<sup>6</sup> When interpreting the verse, "There are no works like Thine,"<sup>7</sup> he writes: "We can ascribe the actions existing in the universe . . . only to you, since you are necessarily existent."<sup>8</sup> Here the allusion is to a proof which establishes the existence of God as a *necessarily existent* being.

When the relevant passages in *Neweh Shalom* are examined, it appears that all of the main elements of Maimonides' discussion are touched upon: Shalom repeats Maimonides' views on the proper method to be followed in proving the existence of God; he repeatedly uses two of Maimonides' proofs; and he also refers to the corollary proofs of other divine attributes, including the unity, incorporeality, and eternity of God, which he has just been seen to list as dogmas.<sup>9</sup>

*Method of proving the existence of God.*—Although Maimonides believed in creation, he based his proofs for the existence of God on the assumption of the eternity of the world. He gave two reasons for this procedure. First, the creation of the world is itself not amenable to demonstration and, therefore, cannot serve as a premise in any further scientific demonstration.<sup>10</sup> Second, on the assumption of the creation of the world, the

<sup>1</sup> M. N. I, 71, 109b: העצומות הנכבדות בקשות השלש.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 174b: עקרים ה' אלו.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: בשאנו גוף ולא כח בגוף. Cf. below, n. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. 19: 2.

<sup>6</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 6, 133a. See below, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. 86: 8.

<sup>8</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74a. See below, n. 62.

<sup>9</sup> Above, n. 4.

<sup>10</sup> M. N. I, 71, 109a-b: במופת לא יגיעו אליה במופת. שזאת השאלה רצוני לומר קדמות העולם או חדושו לא יגיעו אליה במופת. שזאת השאלה רצוני לומר קדמות העולם או חדושו לא יגיעו אליה במופת. שזאת השאלה רצוני לומר קדמות העולם או חדושו לא יגיעו אליה במופת. שזאת השאלה רצוני לומר קדמות העולם או חדושו לא יגיעו אליה במופת.



Shalom does not explicitly repeat Maimonides' statement that in order to give a proper proof of the existence of God, he is assuming the eternity of the world for the sake of argument. Nevertheless, his actual procedure implies that position. In one passage the existence of God is inferred by him from the eternity of the motion of the world.<sup>13</sup> And in other passages he describes at least one of his proofs as Aristotelian,<sup>14</sup> having defined the Aristotelian position as that which "denies the creation of the world," while "granting the existence of God."<sup>15</sup> Thus, while absolutely opposed to the belief in eternity, Shalom in effect, although without explicitly saying so, has assumed the eternity of the world just for the sake of argument. Perhaps he left the assumption implicit because he felt some religious impropriety in explicitly stating that he was going to assume that the world is eternal.<sup>16</sup>

Of four cosmological proofs of the existence of God formulated by Maimonides, the first and third are relevant for the present discussion. The proofs in question have both been shown to be based upon two philosophic principles: the principle of causality, and the impossibility of an infinite regress of causes.<sup>20</sup> They differ according to the guise that the principle of causality takes: Maimonides' first proof establishes a primary cause in

<sup>20</sup> Cf. H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), I, 192-194.

the province of motion, while his third proof establishes a primary cause in the province of existence.<sup>21</sup> Shalom refers to these two proofs and rephrases them in various ways, both severally and in combination. He never states them fully, presumably because he expected the reader to understand the briefest allusions.

*The proof from motion.*—The first proof of the existence of God in Maimonides' *Guide* is intended to establish an unmoved incorporeal cause of all movement in the universe. Maimonides affirmed, essentially, that everything which moves has a cause of its motion and that an infinite regress of moving causes is impossible. From this he inferred that there must be a first, unmoved cause of motion. Then, from the assumption that the motion of the spheres is eternal, Maimonides concluded that their mover must be absolutely unlimited, and therefore incorporeal.<sup>22</sup> This is basically Aristotle's argument in *Physics* VIII and is recognized as such by Shalom. After alluding to it Shalom remarks: "Thus the existence of God is proven speculatively by means of Aristotle's proofs."<sup>23</sup> When Shalom actually cites the proof, he quotes from Maimonides, or, more precisely, from Maimonides' summary: "The present investigation demonstrates that the celestial sphere cannot move itself in eternal motion, that the first cause of its motion is not a body or a force within a body, and that it is one and unchangeable since its existence has no relation to time."<sup>24</sup>

Shalom also finds this proof from motion in Maimonides' rabbinic work, *Mishneh Torah*. Several times he quotes the acrostic with which Maimonides opened that work: "The foundation of all foundations and pillar of all sciences is the knowledge that there exists a first being."<sup>25</sup> Maimonides had proceeded to explain that this being "conducts the celestial sphere with a force which has no limit."<sup>26</sup> Shalom understands this statement as a reference to the proof from motion. He explains that it is intended to show "that from the continued ordering of the sphere we can infer the existence of an infinite cause of its revolution."<sup>27</sup>

In the course of one homily Shalom cites both the *Guide* and *Mishneh Torah* as sources of this proof. Explaining the biblical verse, "The heavens declare the glory of God,"<sup>28</sup> he writes: "From the spherical motion [of the heavens] we can learn that there exists a first incorporeal being, just as Maimonides wrote in the *Guide* . . . and similarly in his *Mishneh Torah*."<sup>29</sup> At this point Shalom proceeds to cite another Biblical text, "I am the Lord your God," which had also been cited in the *Mishneh Torah* in this connection.<sup>30</sup>

While in the passages which have been examined Shalom refers directly, though

<sup>21</sup> M. N. II, 1, 12b-14a; 14b-15b. Cf. below, nn. 22, 49-52.

<sup>22</sup> M. N. II, 1, 12b-14a.

<sup>23</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 6, 133a: ארסטו כפי ראיות העיון כפי ראיות האל יתבאר מדרך העיון כפי ראיות ארסטו.

<sup>24</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74a, quoting M. N. II, 1, 14a: כבר הביא העיון כפי ראיות ארסטו כפי ראיות האל יתבאר מדרך העיון כפי ראיות ארסטו. וכמש"ה בחלק ב' פרק א' וז"ל: כבר הביא העיון כפי ראיות ארסטו כפי ראיות האל יתבאר מדרך העיון כפי ראיות ארסטו. וזהו במופת שהגלגל מן השקר שיגיע עצמו תנועה נצחית ושהסבה הראשונה בתנועתו אינה גשם ולא כח בגשם.

<sup>25</sup> N. Sh. VII, 2, 99b, quoting *Mishneh Torah*, *Sefer ha-Madda*, *Yesode ha-Torah* I, 1: יסוד: המצוי ראשון. Cf. N. Sh. IX, 4, 158b; X, 3, 174b. The initial letters of the first four words in this sentence spell out the tetragrammaton.

<sup>26</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, *Yesode ha-Torah* I, 5: ותכלית לו קץ ותכלית. . . . הוא המנהיג הגלגל בכח שאין לו קץ ותכלית.

<sup>27</sup> N. Sh. IX, 1, 152b: ויש מן המצוי שיש בו קץ ותכלית.

<sup>28</sup> Ps. 19: 2. Cf. above, n. 5.

<sup>29</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 6, 133a: המצוי ראשון אינו גוף כמו שאמר הרב חלק: . . . וכן כתב בספר המדע פרק א'.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, apparently having in mind *Mishneh Torah*, *Yesode ha-Torah* I, 6: ויתבאר גם כן מהתורה: The verse appears in Exod. 20: 2 and Deut. 5: 6.



briefly, to Maimonides' formulation of the proof from motion, once he ventures a formulation of his own. This too is extremely brief. Shalom simply writes: "Every motion points to a mover for nothing can move itself. Therefore the infinite movement [of the celestial spheres] points to an infinite mover."<sup>31</sup> Infinity of motion did not appear in Maimonides' proof. However, since eternal motion did play a part there, we might surmise that by *infinite* Shalom means infinite in time or eternal. It happens that a distinction drawn by Averroes construes *infinite* in just this sense. As Crescas reproduced it, Averroes' distinction reads: "The term infinite may be used in a twofold respect, with regard to intensity and with regard to time."<sup>32</sup> Shalom's definition of the term infinite shows that it is, in fact, just the latter, temporal sense which he has in mind; using phraseology borrowed from Maimonides, he defines *infinite* as meaning "with a force which never ceases (*nifsaq*) and never ends (*kaleh*)."<sup>33</sup> If now the term *eternal* is substituted for *infinite* in Shalom's formulation of the proof from motion, it would read: "The eternal movement [of the celestial spheres] points to an eternal mover." While from the assumption of the eternity of motion Maimonides inferred that the first mover is incorporeal, Shalom merely infers that He is eternal. His formulation bears a strong resemblance to Aristotle's statement: "Motion being eternal, the first mover, if there is but one, will be eternal also."<sup>34</sup>

*The proof from the distinction between possible and necessary existence.*—Maimonides apparently drew his third proof of the existence of God from Avicenna, although the argument took its earliest known form in Alfarabi.<sup>35</sup> Like the proof from motion this is an attempt to establish a first term in a series of causes and effects. It deals, however, with causality in the province of existence. The argument considers the existence of things that are not such as to exist necessarily and eternally by reason of themselves;<sup>36</sup> it concludes that their existence must be due to a being which, on the contrary, is *necessarily existent* and eternal by reason of itself.<sup>37</sup>

The argument, as formulated by Maimonides and therefore as known to Shalom, employed certain distinctions which Avicenna had elaborated. Avicenna had distinguished three conceivable types of being: (a) being which is *necessarily existent* by reason of itself; in effect, God, who is uncaused and whose eternal existence is due to His own nature; (b) being which is *necessarily existent* by reason of its cause, but *possibly existent* by reason of itself; in effect, the celestial intelligences and spheres, which exist necessarily, that is eternally, yet whose necessity or eternity is not due to their own natures, but

<sup>31</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 7a: והתנועה תורה על מניע שהדבר לא יניע עצמו. אם כן זו התנועה הבלתי בעלת תכלית. תורה על מניע בלתי בעל תכלית.

<sup>32</sup> O. H. I, ii, 8, 272, lines 4-5: בזמן בחוזק ואם בחינות אם בחוזק ואם בחינות. Cf. Wolfson's note *ad loc.*

<sup>33</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 7a: בלתי בעל תכלית . . . רוצה לומר בכח הבלתי נפסק וכלה. This reflects *Mishneh Torah, Yesode ha-Torah* I, 5: "It is He who governs the sphere with a force which has no limit or end (*taklit*), with a force which has no cessation (*hefseq*)" (התכלית, בכח שאין לו קץ). (ותכלית, בכח שאין לו הפסק).

<sup>34</sup> *Physics* VIII, 6, 259a, 6-7: *εἴπερ οὐκ αἰδιος ἡ κίνησις, αἰδιον καὶ τὸ δὲ κινεῖν ἔσται πρῶτον, εἰ ἔν.*

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Uyūn al-Masā'il* in *Alfarabi's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, edited by Fr. Dieterici (Leiden, 1890), p. 57.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Wolfson, *Spinoza*, I, 194-195, where a more sophisticated interpretation of this point is given. Shalom, however, understood the proof as it is outlined here; see below, n. 55.

<sup>37</sup> For Avicenna's version, cf. Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal wal-Nihāl*, edited by W. Cureton (London, 1846), p. 376.

comes from an external cause, the deity; (c) being which is possible in every respect, that is, the transient things in the lower world of change.<sup>38</sup> As was presumably known to Shalom, but was unknown to Maimonides, Avicenna had been challenged concerning the second of these classes. Averroes had maintained that it is contradictory to speak of something existing both necessarily and possibly, even if a distinction is drawn between its being necessary by reason of its cause and its being possible by reason of itself.<sup>39</sup> In other words, once the intelligences and spheres are identified as necessary or eternal beings, their existence cannot be described as possible in any respect. Maimonides, not knowing Averroes' criticism, did use Avicenna's distinction in the course of his third proof of the existence of God. He argued that a *necessarily existent* being must be so "either by reason of itself or by reason of its cause";<sup>40</sup> in the latter case it would belong to that class of being which Avicenna had defined as having existence which is necessary by reason of its cause, but only possible by reason of itself.<sup>41</sup> Still, in another passage, Maimonides used the term *necessary existence* without adding any qualification, and therefore without taking Avicenna's distinction into account.<sup>42</sup>

Shalom's usage varies in a similar way. On the one hand, there are passages in which he employs Avicenna's distinction either explicitly or implicitly. For example, he writes that "the existence of the intelligences is possible by reason of themselves, but necessary by reason of their cause."<sup>43</sup> Again, he describes the spheres and intelligences as "possibly existent by reason of themselves";<sup>44</sup> this expression implies (a) that such beings have another aspect in which they are necessary, in other words, that they are necessary by reason of their cause; and (b) that there may also exist at least one being that is *necessary* by reason of itself. In contrast to these passages where Shalom accepts Avicenna's distinction, there are others where he ignores it and simply describes all being outside of God as *possibly existent*. For example, when defining the terms in question, he describes a *necessarily existent* being as one that "has not acquired his existence from another, but whose existence is necessitated by and follows from his essence";<sup>45</sup> correspondingly, *possibly existent* beings are those "which do acquire their existence from another."<sup>46</sup> This leaves no place for a class of beings whose existence is necessary in one respect, but possible in another. Again, Shalom writes: "Although there are things which are incorruptible and permanent, such as the angels and the celestial bodies, nevertheless, they

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373. Cf. Averroes, *Quaestiones in Physica*, edited by H. Tunik (Radcliffe College thesis, 1956), Hebrew section, p. 89.

<sup>39</sup> Some of the passages in which the objection occurs have been collected and translated by H. A. Wolfson, "Averroes' Lost Treatise on the Prime Mover," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XXIII/1 (1950-1951), 698-702.

<sup>40</sup> See below, n. 50. On the question of Maimonides' acquaintance with Averroes, see Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, p. 323.

<sup>41</sup> The only thing that would be necessary by its cause but possible by reason of itself would be the universe outside of God, if conceived as existing eternally.

<sup>42</sup> In the course of his third proof of the existence of God, "uncaused" is given as the definition of being which is *necessarily existent by reason of itself*. On M. N. I, 57, 84a, where the qualification is omitted, this is given as the definition of a being which is simply *necessarily existent*: מי שאין מחוייב המציאות . . . זה הוא ענין אמרנו . . . מחוייב המציאות יסבה למציאותו Cf. below, n. 45.

<sup>43</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 5, 103a: מצד עצמם מחוייב מצד עלתם . . .

<sup>44</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74a: שכלם אפשרי המציאות מצד עצמם . . . Cf. VIII, 6, 133a; VII, ii, 7, 119a.

<sup>45</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 203a: מציאותו מחוייב . . . אלא מציאותו מחוייב . . . ענין מחוייב המציאות . . . שמוציאותו נמשך מעצמותו לא שהקנה לו זולתו Cf. X, 1, 172a: יונמשך מעצמותו

<sup>46</sup> N. Sh. V, 4, 64b: קנו המציאות שכלם קנו המציאות . . . והוא יתברך מחוייב המציאות והוא איפשרי המציאות שכלם קנו המציאות . . . אמנם קנו Cf. Averroes, *Quaestiones in Physica*, edited by H. Tunik, Hebrew section, p. 89: קנו המציאות . . . מהתחלה הראשונה . . .



are *possibly existent*, while only God is *necessarily existent*.<sup>47</sup> Here again the category "necessary by reason of its cause, but possible by reason of itself" is ignored. Shalom, then, is acquainted with Avicenna's distinction, but, like Maimonides, does not always use it. The important point for both Maimonides and Shalom is that the necessary existence of God is radically different from the existence of all other beings.<sup>48</sup>

These distinctions were made as preliminaries for a demonstration of the actual existence of a being which is necessarily existent by reason of itself. Maimonides, in his presentation of the demonstration, had proceeded in several steps. First, he established the existence of an eternal being in the world and identified it as "necessarily existent, not possibly existent."<sup>49</sup> Then, he argued that this being must be necessarily existent "either by reason of itself or by reason of its cause",<sup>50</sup> and in the latter case, the cause must also be analyzed in terms of the same alternatives. Since "the existence of an infinite number of causes and effects is impossible,"<sup>51</sup> Maimonides concluded, we must eventually reach a being which is necessarily existent by reason of itself.<sup>52</sup> This is the deity.

When Shalom refers to this proof, he omits both Maimonides' preliminary steps, and Avicenna's distinction (which he has just been shown to recognize) of being which is necessary by its cause and possible in itself. In this way the argument is reduced to its minimal form. It consists merely in deriving the existence of a *necessarily existent* being, directly from the principle which denies the possibility of an infinite regress of causes. Shalom simply writes: "It is known that there is one efficient cause for all [things in the universe]. For as has been stated by the scholar in its proper place, the existence of an infinite number of causes and effects is impossible."<sup>53</sup> The last clause is quoted verbatim from Maimonides,<sup>54</sup> and indicates that Maimonides is Shalom's source. The argument is stated by Shalom in another passage, again in an abbreviated form, but with the pertinent addition that the causality considered in this proof is causality in the province of existence: "It has been shown that the existence of a chain of causes and effects having an infinite number is impossible. Therefore the chain of existence must terminate at a being who is necessarily existent and the source of existence of all."<sup>55</sup> Following Maimonides who had described this as a demonstration which admits no doubt, Shalom explains that "the necessary existence of God" is as clear as the "sun . . . [whose existence] cannot be denied by anyone."<sup>56</sup>

To demonstrate the principle upon which the argument is based, that is, the im-

<sup>47</sup> N. Sh. I, 10, 12a: שים דברים בלתי נפסדים וקיימים כמלאכים וגרמים עם כל זה הם אפשרי. המציאות והוא מחוייב המציאות. Note that Shalom eliminates the second category by assigning the celestial spheres and intelligences to the category of possible beings; this is because, after all, he believed that they are created beings. But Averroes, in the passages referred to in n. 39, eliminated the second category by assigning those beings to the category of necessary beings.

<sup>48</sup> See below, p. 34.

<sup>49</sup> M. N. II, 1 (3), 15a: המחוייב המציאות לא אפשר המציאות.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: מהיותו בבחינת עצמו או בבחינת סבתו.

<sup>51</sup> M. N. II, introduction, proposition 3: שמציאות עלות ועלולים אין תכלית למספרם שר.

<sup>52</sup> M. N. II, 1, 14b-15b.

<sup>53</sup> N. Sh. X, 9, 188a: שר המציאות עלות ועלולים אין תכלית למספרם שר. The "scholar" (*hoger*) to whom Shalom refers is either Maimonides or, possibly Crescas; cf. below.

<sup>54</sup> See above, n. 51.

<sup>55</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 6b: שהתבאר שמציאות עלות ועלולים משתלשלים זה מזה אין תכלית למספרם שר. מחוייב אם כן שתכלית המציאות לנמצא מחוייבת המציאות שהוא מקור המציאות לכל.

<sup>56</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 178a-b: לא יוכל לשמש שמש מוחש לעין לא יוכל. Cf. M. N. II, 1, 15a. שהוא ית' מצד חיוב מציאותו נמשל לשמש שכשם שהשמש מוחש לעין לא יוכל.

possibility of an infinite regress of causes, Shalom goes to Crescas. He quotes Crescas almost verbatim, but without indicating his source: "The reason for the impossibility of an infinite series of causes and effects is as follows. Supposing that they existed, there would necessarily be only two possibilities: either they would all be effects or they would not all be effects. If they were all assumed to be effects, they would be possibly existent and would require a determinant to bring about the preponderance of existence over nonexistence. Therefore, they would necessarily have an uncaused cause [as a first member of the series, while the assumption was that all of the members are effects]. If, however, they were not all assumed to be effects, one of them necessarily would be an uncaused cause, this forming the end of the series. But according to the original supposition the series is infinite. Hence [in either case] there is an impossible contradiction. The contradiction results when we suppose an infinite number of causes and effects."<sup>57</sup> This argument of Crescas, it may be noted, proves more than it claims to. It purports only to show that in every type of causation, each series of causes and effects has a first term. The argument concludes, however, that no matter what the type of causation, the first term brings about the "preponderance of existence over nonexistence" of all of the members of the series, or, in other words, that it is the first cause not only of the activity, but also of the existence of each of the members. Thus, while ostensibly demonstrating the general impossibility of an infinite regress of causes, Crescas has really given a version of Maimonides' third proof of the existence of God. This may be the reason why, when Shalom alludes to the third proof, he cites nothing besides the principle that denies the possibility of an infinite regress of causes.<sup>58</sup>

*The combination of Maimonides' first and third proofs.*—The proof from motion and the proof from the distinction between possible and necessary existence, besides being cited by Shalom separately, are also combined by him into a kind of montage. In one passage, parts of which have already been referred to, Shalom quotes the section in Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* which he understands to allude to the proof from motion. There, he explains, Maimonides demonstrated that from the "continual ordering of the sphere" we can conclude the existence of an "infinite cause of its revolution."<sup>59</sup> However, Shalom does not stop at this point. He proceeds to cite Crescas' demonstration of the impossibility of an infinite regress of causes, thus showing that the cause of the motion of the spheres is itself "uncaused."<sup>60</sup> Then he concludes a somewhat lengthy argument as follows: "Thus it has been shown that we can infer from the greatness of the acts of God, that He is necessarily existent."<sup>61</sup> In this passage, while ostensibly giving a single proof, Shalom has conflated two, first establishing a primary cause of motion, and then arguing that it is *necessarily existent*, which here seems to mean that it is the cause of the *existence* of everything else in the universe. Elsewhere, Shalom provides a similar but more abbreviated combination, drawing the conclusion of Maimonides' third proof directly

<sup>57</sup> N. Sh. IX, 1, 152b, quoting O. H. I, i, 3, 222, lines 1-8: תכלית לאין ועולמים עלות המנע עלות ועולמים לאין תכלית. והוא כי לא ימלט מהיותם כלם עלולים אם לא. ואם היו כלם עלולים הנה הם אפשר המציאות ולפי שהיו צריכים למכריע יכריע מציאותם על העדרם הנה להם עלה בלתי עלולה בהכרח ואם לא היו כלם עלולים הנה א' מהם עלה בלתי עלולה בהכרח שהיא תכלית ההשתלשלות. וכבר הונח שלא היה לו תכלית. זה בטל ושקר והשקר הזה נתחייב בהניחנו עלות ועולמים אין תכלית למספרם.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. also, O. H. I, iii, 2.

<sup>59</sup> See above, nn. 26, 27.

<sup>60</sup> See above, n. 57.

<sup>61</sup> N. Sh. IX, 1, 152b: המציאות נדע שהוא מחוייב המציאות.



from the argument of the first. He writes: "We can ascribe the actions existing in the universe, for example the movement of the sphere, only to . . . [a] necessarily existent [being]."<sup>62</sup>

These combinations may be justified when we consider that the two arguments in question are similar in form and, in fact, nothing but different versions of a single argument.<sup>63</sup> Both assert the principle of causality and the impossibility of an infinite regress of causes, and then proceed to a first cause.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, although it is impossible to determine the degree to which Shalom has consciously thought out this point, he may be understood as having formulated a broader argument which passes from different forms of causality in the universe to a first cause of both motion and existence. In any case, it may be interesting to note that another Jewish philosopher, Albo, offered a combined proof of the same type.<sup>65</sup>

*Divine unity and incorporeality.*—The unity and incorporeality of God were deduced by Maimonides as corollaries from his proofs of the existence of God and were also proved by him in other ways.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, Shalom refers to a "demonstration" of these attributes of God,<sup>67</sup> and remarks that "no philosopher has a doubt" concerning them.<sup>68</sup> He also shows how these and other attributes may be deduced from Maimonides' first and third proofs of the existence of God.

In his first proof, Maimonides had argued that if the motion of the sphere is eternal, its mover must be unlimited and therefore incorporeal; and since there is no way in which differentiation could take place within an incorporeal being, it also follows that He is one.<sup>69</sup> Shalom, as was seen earlier, quotes the conclusion of this argument, showing that the motion of the spheres implies the existence of one, incorporeal, eternal mover: "The present investigation demonstrates . . . that the first cause of the motion [of the celestial sphere] is not a body or a force within a body, that it is one and unchangeable, and that its existence has no relation to time."<sup>70</sup> Shalom's own inference of the eternity of God from the eternity of motion in the universe was also quoted earlier.<sup>71</sup> However, since Shalom does not in reality believe in the eternity of the universe and its motion, but assumes it only for the sake of argument, he infers the eternity of God from the assumption of creation as well: "God is not subject to time, for He created it. Therefore, He is eternal."<sup>72</sup>

While Shalom only alluded to Maimonides' third proof of the existence of God, he

<sup>62</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74a: לא נוכל ליחס הפעולות הנמצאות בעולם כמו תנועת הגרם רק לך לבדך להיותך מחוץ למציאות.

<sup>63</sup> See above, n. 20.

<sup>64</sup> See above, pp. 18, 21.

<sup>65</sup> While Shalom combines Maimonides' first and third proofs, Albo apparently combines the third and fourth; see *Sefer ha-'Iqqarim* II, 4, 27-29, especially p. 28, lines 5-10. Possibly, however, both Shalom and Albo are simply using *necessarily existent* in the sense of *uncaused*; cf. above, nn. 42, 45.

<sup>66</sup> M. N. II, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. below, nn. 73, 76.

<sup>68</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 89a: כמו שאין ספק לשום מעיין באחדות השם ושאין גוף.

<sup>69</sup> M. N. II, 1, 13b-14a. According to Maimonides, incorporeal beings can be differentiated only if one is the cause of another. Therefore there could be no differentiation between two incorporeal beings if both should be uncaused.

<sup>70</sup> See above, n. 24.

<sup>71</sup> Above, nn. 31, 32.

<sup>72</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 7, 119b: שהוא יתברך אינו נופל תחת הזמן לפי שהוא ברא הזמן, ולכן הוא נצחי.



quotes the corollary argument for divine unity at slightly greater length. One of the things implied by necessary existence, he writes, is "that God is [one] without a partner." To prove this, Shalom repeats Maimonides' argument. He contends that a plurality of necessarily existent beings is conceivable only if each is assumed to have its own individuality, to which the common element "necessary existence" is added. But in this case, of course, each would be "necessarily existent by reason of the [added] element (*al-ma'ni*)," not "solely by reason of itself." Thus, no more than one being which is necessarily existent solely by reason of itself is possible.<sup>73</sup>

Besides divine unity, Shalom derives other attributes from the necessary existence of God. Following Maimonides, he deduces the simplicity of the deity. Maimonides had argued that for every complex being, the combination of components is the cause of existence; consequently, since a necessarily existent being can have no cause, it can contain no components.<sup>74</sup> Accordingly, Shalom writes: "Since God is necessarily existent, He is not composed of parts."<sup>75</sup> Other attributes which may be derived from the necessary existence of God, according to Shalom, are unchangeability and impassibility. He writes: "It has been demonstrated that the necessarily existent being is not liable to change or affection in any respect."<sup>76</sup> No such demonstration is given by Maimonides. However, Maimonides did deduce the impassibility of God from His simplicity. The argument was that the presence of an affection implies that the subject is compound; consequently, since the divine essence is simple and not compound, it can contain no affection.<sup>77</sup> Since the simplicity of God was in its turn deduced from necessary existence, Shalom is justified in writing that the impassibility of God also may be deduced from the attribute of necessary existence. Elsewhere, Shalom writes that "the necessarily existent is eternal"; presumably he is thinking of the Aristotelian principle that necessity and eternity are mutually implicative.<sup>78</sup> It is also possible that in writing here that eternity, and before that impassibility, follow from necessary existence, Shalom is just using the latter term as a philosophic synonym for *deity*, and noting that there are philosophic demonstrations for these attributes.

Elsewhere Shalom uses the term necessarily existent as a synonym for God in a non-philosophic context. He writes: "There are three things which belong only to the necessarily existent: (a) Of all beings, he alone is absolutely great. (b) He has the power to change the nature of all individual beings. (c) He is one without a colleague."<sup>79</sup> The third of these attributes, divine unity, is a philosophic, as well as a religious, principle, which, as has been seen, was demonstrated in various ways. The first attribute, the "absolute greatness" of God, may also be understood in a philosophic sense as a general term for all of the other attributes of God. However, by the "power to change the nature

<sup>73</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74b, quoting M. N. II, 1, 15b: בחלק ז"ל בחלק זה הרמב"ם ז"ל בחלק: כי אין לו שותף וכמו שאמר זה הרמב"ם ז"ל בחלק: שני פרק ראשון וזה לשונו וכן יתבאר במופת בקלות שחייב המציאות בבחינת העצם מן השקר שימצא לשנים כי יהיה מין חייב המציאות ענין נוסף על עצם כל אחד משניהם ולא יהיה אחד מהם מחוייב המציאות לבד אבן אבן מחוייב בענין ההוא See S. Munk, *Le Guide des Égarés*, three volumes (Paris, 1856-1866), II, 42, n. 1.

<sup>74</sup> M. N. II, introduction, proposition 21.

<sup>75</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 201a: מחלקים: יגה להיותו יתברך מחוייב המציאות אינו מורכב מחלקים.

<sup>76</sup> N. Sh. II, 8, 36a: שכל התבאר במופת שהמחוייב המציאות יתברך אינו מקבל השנוי ולא ההתפעלות: בשום צד.

<sup>77</sup> M. N. I, 52, 73a-b.

<sup>78</sup> N. Sh. V, 4, 64b: יולפי שהמחוייב המציאות נצחי Cf. *De Gen. et Corr.* II, 338a, 1.

<sup>79</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74a: (ו)הוא גדול [הא'] יולפי שנמצא ג' דברים מחוייבים למחוייב המציאות מזולתו [הא'] (ו)הוא גדול: במוחלט מכל הנמצאים, הב' יכלתו בכל אישי הנמצאות לשנות טבעיהם הג' היותו אחד ואין שותף לו.



of all individual beings" Shalom means the power to perform miracles, which clearly is not a philosophic principle. In listing it as one of the things which belong to a necessarily existent being, Shalom must be using the latter term as a synonym for *deity* even as conceived in religious tradition.

*Summary.*—While Shalom does not undertake a formal discussion of the proofs of the existence of God, it has appeared that he refers to the main elements in Maimonides' discussion. The correct method of proving the existence of God, he writes, is through a cosmological proof based on the Aristotelian assumption of the eternity of the world. Two proofs of this type are cited by Shalom from Maimonides. They are presented in a variety of ways, usually being quoted or alluded to in an abbreviated form, sometimes being combined with one another. In addition, again with reference to Maimonides' discussion, Shalom cites proofs of such divine attributes as unity, incorporeality, and eternity, which he calls dogmas, as well as simplicity, unchangeability, and impassibility.

The abbreviated and incomplete nature of Shalom's references is marked throughout. This casual form of the proofs and the nonphilosophic contexts in which they appear indicate the degree to which the proofs, their premises, and their corollaries were taken for granted by him. Clearly, they were such an integral part of the philosophic culture of the time that he could accept them without question and expect his readers to do the same.

### CHAPTER III

## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

AS WAS SEEN in the previous chapter, Shalom follows Maimonides in proving certain fundamental principles about the deity: He exists, or to state this as a logical proposition, He is *existent*; He is *one* and *incorporeal*.<sup>1</sup> The formal question of the sense in which these and other terms may or may not be predicated of God constitutes the problem of divine attributes.

The problem is as old as medieval philosophy itself.<sup>2</sup> It arose from the consideration that an incorrect judgment concerning the nature of the deity would indicate that the person making the judgment has an incorrect belief, or perhaps no belief in God. Thus it would be essential that anyone predicating any term of God should predicate the term in precisely the proper way; and if, as when repeating Biblical descriptions, a person must make a judgment which is not formulated correctly, he should at least understand it as if it were, in fact, formulated correctly.

While discussions of the problem of divine attributes had taken various forms, here as elsewhere Shalom's conception is limited to Maimonides' formulation. The narrow task which Shalom sets for himself is the defense of Maimonides' position against the criticisms of Gersonides and Crescas. This he accomplishes by answering each of a series of objections which Gersonides and Crescas had raised. Whenever possible, his defense consists in the citation of a statement of Maimonides which anticipates or answers the objection. Thus, in the course of his defense he is led to recapitulate and interpret large sections of Maimonides' discussion. However, since he follows the path of the critics, he does not reproduce the order of Maimonides' discussion or give equal emphasis to each of its parts.

In the present chapter we shall examine Shalom's rather unsystematic replies to the objections of Gersonides and Crescas on the question of divine attributes, as well as the remarks relevant to this question which he makes in other connections. It will appear that Shalom had a fairly complete understanding of Maimonides' position, that on a few points he interprets Maimonides, while on others he departs from his view. The elements in Maimonides' discussion in terms of which we shall examine Shalom's various statements are: the classification of attributes; the reasons for disallowing certain interpretations of divine attributes and allowing others; the interpretation of the tetragrammaton.

*The classification of attributes.*—To establish criteria for the proper and improper interpretations of divine attributes, Maimonides provided an analysis of all logical predicates. This consisted of a general, twofold classification of attributes, and an expanded, fivefold classification. Shalom restates the twofold classification with certain

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 16 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 102.



changes. He does not restate the fivefold classification, but makes at least casual reference to each of its parts.

Maimonides' twofold classification reads: "An attribute must be one of two things. It is either the very essence of the object being described, in which case it is the explanation of a term, . . . or else the attribute is not the object being described but something super-added, in which case it is an accident of that essence."<sup>3</sup> Shalom reproduces this statement as follows: "An essential attribute must either: (a) signify the whole essence of what is described ('*eṣem ha-metoar*'); or (b) signify a part of it; or (c) be superadded to the essence ('*ašmut*'). If it signifies the whole essence, . . . it is the explanation of a term as Maimonides wrote. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Apart from some slight changes in wording, Shalom's statement differs from Maimonides' in two important respects. First, Shalom purports to give an analysis of "essential attributes," while Maimonides' classification was simply of "attributes." Second, Shalom expands Maimonides' twofold classification into a threefold classification, by the addition of the attribute which "signifies a part of the essence." The first of these changes will be more conveniently examined in another connection.<sup>5</sup> The second may be explained by considering the attribute which "signifies the whole essence." According to Maimonides and Shalom, it is "the explanation of a term." Maimonides had illustrated what he calls an *explanation of a term* by the description of man as a *rational animal*.<sup>6</sup> Since this description is the logical definition of man,<sup>7</sup> the attribute which "signifies the whole essence" must be the logical definition. By the same token, the attribute which signifies "part of the essence" must be a part of the definition, that is, either the genus or the specific difference. Therefore, when Shalom expands Maimonides' twofold classification by adding the attribute which "signifies part of the essence," what he has added, in effect, is the attribute which is part of a definition. It happens that *part of a definition* is enumerated as one type of attribute in Maimonides' detailed classification,<sup>8</sup> so that it is just one item in the detailed classification which Shalom has added or, more precisely, made explicit in reproducing Maimonides' twofold classification. Shalom's reason for making this addition, which appears in his criticism of Crescas, may have been that Crescas also had referred to the possibility of an attribute signifying the whole essence or part of the essence.<sup>9</sup>

In his fivefold classification of attributes, Maimonides had enumerated the following: (a) definition, (b) part of a definition, (c) quality, (d) relation, (e) action.<sup>10</sup> While Shalom

<sup>3</sup> M. N. I, 51, 71a: הנה כבר התבאר כי התאר לא ימלט מאחד משני דברים, אם שיהיה הוא עצם המתואר זה יבא להיות התואר ויהיה פירוש שם, . . . ואם יהיה התואר בלתי המתואר אבל הוא ענין מוסף על המתואר, זה יבא להיות התואר ויהיה פירוש שם, . . . ואם יהיה התואר בלתי המתואר אבל הוא ענין מוסף על המתואר, זה יבא להיות התואר ויהיה פירוש שם, . . . ואם יהיה התואר בלתי המתואר אבל הוא ענין מוסף על המתואר, זה יבא להיות התואר ויהיה פירוש שם, . . . Neither Maimonides nor Shalom states the distinction between an attribute in the form of an abstract noun (e.g., *rationality*, *animality*), and those predicates which do not take that form (as *rational* or *animal*).

<sup>4</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 210a: התאר העצמי לא ימנע אם שיוורה על כל עצם המתואר או על חלק ממנו או יהיה . . . אם יהיה פירוש שם כמש"ה פרק ב'א' גוסף על העצמות. אם היה מורה על כל העצם . . .

<sup>5</sup> Below, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> M. N. I, 51, 71a.

<sup>7</sup> The expression *explanation of a term*, taken by itself, would more properly correspond to Aristotle's definition of the so-called *nominal definition* as "a phrase of what a terms signifies" (*λόγος τοῦ τί σημαίνει τὸ ὄνομα*). However, Maimonides' usage shows that what he means here is the *real definition*. A full discussion of this point is to be found in H. A. Wolfson, "Maimonides' Division of Attributes," *Essays and Studies in Memory of Linda R. Miller* (New York, 1938), pp. 206-211.

<sup>8</sup> See below, n. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. O. H. I, iii, 3, 25a: והוא היתה הידיעה עצמותו או חלק מעצמותו

<sup>10</sup> M. N. I, 52.



does not repeat the classification as such, in one way or another he mentions all of its parts.

It has already been seen that the first two types of attributes in this classification, definition and part of a definition, are referred to by Shalom in his version of Maimonides' general classification. In another connection Shalom also repeats the key statement in Maimonides' analysis of definition. Maimonides wrote: "This attribute signifies the quiddity of the thing and its true nature,"<sup>11</sup> and Shalom similarly explains: "The definition is what signifies the thing and its quiddity in every respect."<sup>12</sup>

The third type of attribute in Maimonides' classification is quality. Following Aristotle, Maimonides had enumerated four subdivisions of quality, two of which are "a disposition of the soul" (*tekunah ba-nefesh*, διάθεσις) and "an affective quality or affection" (*ekut mitpa'elet, hippa'alut*, παθητικαὶ ποιότητες καὶ πάθη).<sup>13</sup> In various contexts Shalom also refers to the attribute of "quality,"<sup>14</sup> and to the two subdivisions, "disposition of the soul"<sup>15</sup> and "affection."<sup>16</sup>

The fourth type of attribute in Maimonides' classification is relation. This he subdivided into "correlation" and "some relation,"<sup>17</sup> neither of which he explained in a perfectly clear manner.

The difficulty in understanding just what Maimonides meant by the first of these subdivisions arises from the fact that for Aristotle not just one, but every, type of relative term must have its corresponding correlative.<sup>18</sup> However, a suggestion of Maimonides' intention was given when he illustrated this type of attribute by the relation of father to son,<sup>19</sup> for this is the illustration given by Aristotle for the specific relation found between the "active and the passive,"<sup>20</sup> that is, between cause and effect. Considering that Maimonides used the same example, he has been interpreted as employing the term *correlation* precisely in the sense of the Aristotelian relation of cause and effect.<sup>21</sup> Shalom does not provide a comparable analysis of Maimonides' use of this term. Yet through the medium of one of Crescas' objections he does mention the relation of cause to effect as at least the typical case of correlation,<sup>22</sup> so that very possibly he understood correlation in the precise sense of causal relation.

Shalom also quotes and interprets a statement of Maimonides' to the effect that the peculiar feature of a correlation is the presence of an "equivalent reciprocity."<sup>23</sup> This statement is explained by Shalom as meaning that "just as one correlation can be stated, another can also be stated."<sup>24</sup> In other words, A can be said to be related to B only if, by

<sup>11</sup> M. N. I, 52, 72b: זיה התאר הוא המורה על מהות הדבר ואמתתו.

<sup>12</sup> N. Sh. X, 1, 172a: שהגדר הוא המודיע הדבר ומהותו מכל ענין.

<sup>13</sup> M. N. I, 52, 73a. Cf. Aristotle, *Categories* 8, 8b, 27; 9a, 28-29.

<sup>14</sup> See below, n. 35.

<sup>15</sup> See below, n. 84.

<sup>16</sup> See below, nn. 47, 84.

<sup>17</sup> M. N. I, 52, 73b-74a.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *Categories* 7, 6b, 28.

<sup>19</sup> M. N. I, 52, 73b.

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* V, 15, 1021a, 23-24.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Wolfson, "Maimonides' Division of Attributes," *Essays . . . in Memory of Linda R. Miller*, pp. 222-224.

<sup>22</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 203a-b, dealing with O. H. I, iii, 3; cf. below, n. 67.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 203a, quoting M. N. I, 52, 73b: התהפך בשווי.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 203b: הרץ הרב ואמר שאחר שמסגולות המצטרפים ההתהפך בשווי רוצה לומר שבאותו האופן שיאמר ההצטרפות האחד יאמר האחר ואם לא יהיה האחד לא יהיה האחר, המשל אם לא יהיה האדון לא יהיה העבד ואם לא יהיה עבד לא יהיה אדון וכן בענין הבן והאב יושו בזה האופן מההצטרפות.



<sup>35</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 2, 59b: כמשה'ה ח'א פ' נ'ד וז'ל והכונה כלה שהתארים המיוחדים לו יתברך הם: תארי פעולותיו לא שהוא ית' בעל איכות

In this connection he also uses a traditional philosophic term, *essential attribute*, apparently, however, in a new way.<sup>36</sup> He writes: "Maimonides did not allow essential attributes of God which are derived from acts."<sup>37</sup> This statement implies that there are two types of attribute derived from acts, one *essential* and not allowed by Maimonides as an attribute of God, the other *nonessential* and allowed by Maimonides. Further, Shalom states that this distinction is actually to be found in Maimonides. The only passage which might have suggested it, is that in which Maimonides illustrated the different types of proposition by which a single situation may be described: one might say, "A is a carpenter," using a predicate of quality, or "A fashioned," using a predicate of action. Assuming that it is, in fact, these two types of predicate which Shalom has in mind, we may make the following identification: What Shalom by implication calls an *essential* attribute derived from an act may not be predicated of God; accordingly, it is equivalent to Maimonides' attribute of quality since that, as will appear, also is said not to be predicable of God. On the other hand, what Shalom calls a *nonessential* attribute derived from an act may be predicated of God; it, accordingly, is equivalent to Maimonides' attribute of action, for both Maimonides and Shalom do allow that to serve as a divine predicate. Shalom, then, is here using the term *nonessential* to designate attributes of action in the strict sense, and the term *essential* to designate attributes of quality. In another passage, quoted earlier, he terms *essential* any attribute which is a definition, part of a definition, or is superadded to the essence, this last, in effect, being just a quality.<sup>38</sup> Taking the two passages together, it appears that Shalom uses the designation *essential* for the first three types of attribute in Maimonides' classification, in other words, for those attributes which refer to the subject itself. He uses the designation *nonessential* for the attribute of action, which refers not to the subject, but rather to its activity. The attribute of relation does not enter the scheme.

Besides reflecting the distinction drawn by Maimonides between the other attributes and the attribute of action, Shalom reproduces what for Maimonides seems to have been the most important feature of the latter: When a judgment is made by means of an attribute of action, it does not imply the presence of any actual quality or other element in the agent which performs the act. Repeating an explanation given by Maimonides, Shalom writes that different effects may be understood to proceed from a single power even in the case of a "natural" agent; for example, fire produces six different effects, all of them proceeding from its heat. This being the case in natural causation, he adds, still quoting Maimonides, it will be far more true in voluntary causation, where it is the free choice of the agent which is the origin of a variety of acts.<sup>39</sup> The virtue of attributes of action is that when used to describe a multiplicity of effects, they reflect the possibility of all proceeding from a single power; there is no implication of the presence "of different elements in the essence of the agent."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Wolfson, *Spinoza*, I, 114, interprets the term *essential attribute* in its ordinary usage as meaning an attribute which is either the genus, species, or differentia. For other interpretations, see Munk, *Guide*, I, 180, n. 1.

<sup>37</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 202b: השרב לא התיר תארים עצמיים הנגזרים מפעולות.

<sup>38</sup> Above, p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> N. Sh. X, i, 172b, quoting M. N. I, 53, 76a. The six effects produced by fire are: blackening, whitening, cooking, burning, melting, and coagulating.

<sup>40</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 207b: אחר שנדע שאלו הפעולות המתחלפות לא יעשו בעניינים מתחלפים בעצם: תדע שאלו הפעולות המתחלפות לא יתחייב שיעשו בעניינים מתחלפים בעצם הפועל.



*Admissible and inadmissible interpretations of divine attributes.*—Shalom's references to Maimonides' classification of attributes are only incidental; the main task which he undertakes is the defense of Maimonides' position on the admissible and inadmissible interpretations of divine attributes. Three aspects of his defense of Maimonides may be considered: (a) the question of the admissibility as a divine attribute of each of the five types just examined; (b) negative divine attributes; (c) the equivocal nature of divine attributes.

(a) Shalom follows Maimonides in maintaining that of the five types of attribute distinguished by Maimonides, only the attribute of action may be predicated of God.

Maimonides first ruled out the interpretation of any divine attribute as a definition. The reason, he explained, is that in a sense the definition of a thing is its cause, while "there is nothing which might be an antecedent . . . cause of God's existence, and by which God might be limited."<sup>41</sup> Shalom paraphrases this reasoning, although not as a part of his discussion of attributes: "There is one thing which has neither cause nor definition, which cannot be known through its cause, since it has no cause, or through its definition, since it has no definition. That is God."<sup>42</sup>

Maimonides also ruled out the interpretation of any divine attribute as part of a definition, on the ground that the essence of God has no parts: "Should He have part of an essence (*mahut*), His essence would be compound."<sup>43</sup> Shalom similarly rules out this type of divine attribute, "since God is not composed of parts."<sup>44</sup>

Maimonides, thirdly, ruled out the interpretation of divine attributes as any type of quality, since God contains no kind of quality.<sup>45</sup> Shalom similarly writes that God possesses no quality.<sup>46</sup> Also, referring to affection, which is one type of quality, he writes: "God has no potentiality which might make Him susceptible to affection."<sup>47</sup>

After Maimonides considered each of these three attributes separately, he also presented a single, over-all objection to construing any divine attribute either as a definition, part of a definition, or a quality. Each of these, he explained, implies a composition or plurality of parts in the subject, while the nature of God was demonstrated to be perfectly simple.<sup>48</sup>

This argument is repeated by Shalom. In one passage he uses it to rule out any attribute which "signifies part of the essence" or is "superadded to the essence," that is, the second and third types in Maimonides' classification.<sup>49</sup> In another passage he extends the argument, explaining that no divine predicate may be interpreted as an "essential

<sup>41</sup> M. N. I, 52, 72b: *אין לו סבות קודמות שהם סבת מציאותו ויוגבל בהם*. For the Aristotelian source of this reasoning see Munk, *Guide*, I, 190 n. 3.

<sup>42</sup> N. Sh. XIII, 2, 212a: *אולם יש דבר שאין לו סבה ולא גדר, לא נוכל לדעתו מצד הסבה אחר*. שאין לו סבה ולא מצד הגדר גם כן אחר שאין לו גדר והוא הש"י.

<sup>43</sup> M. N. I, 52, 72b: *שאם היה לו חלק מהות תהיה מהותו מורכבת*.

<sup>44</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 201a: *דאם יורה על חלק מהעצם הנה להיותו יתברך מחוייב המציאות אינו מורכב מחלקים*.

<sup>45</sup> M. N. I, 52, 73a-b.

<sup>46</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 2, 59b, quoted above, n. 35.

<sup>47</sup> N. Sh. I, 6, 5b: *אין בו יתברך שום כח לקבל ההתפעלות*. In translating this passage I have taken *koah* in the technical sense of potentiality. Shalom may simply mean: "God cannot contain any affection."

<sup>48</sup> M. N. I, 52, 73b; cf. above, p. 24. The argument would be that definition or part of a definition imply that the essence is composed of genus and specific difference, and quality implies that the subject is composed of essence and accident.

<sup>49</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 201a-b: *התאר העצמי לא ימנע אם שורה על כל עצם המתואר או על חלק ממנו*. או יהיה נוסף על העצמות . . . ואם יורה על חלק מהעצם הנה להיותו יתברך מחוייב המציאות אינו מורכב מחלקים . . . ואם היא ענין נוסף על עצמותו כבר באר הרב בטולו . . . יש בה מהסכנה למה שיוור על מהתאר העצמי לא ימנע אם שורה על כל עצם המתואר או על חלק ממנו. Cf. above, n. 44.



affirmative attribute," for that would imply that the essence of God is "composed of different separate attributes."<sup>50</sup> If we were correct in suggesting that Shalom designates as *essential* the first three types of attribute in Maimonides' classification,<sup>51</sup> then what he is stating here is just Maimonides' argument that all three of these attributes would imply composition in any subject of which they are predicated.

This argument of Maimonides can be understood only as resting upon some non-nominalist theory of attributes and of universals in general, for it is only when an attribute is assumed to have a real reference that its predication can imply composition in the subject. In other words, if the attribute which is part of the definition is understood to refer to a real part of the essence, then it carries the implication that the essence is composite. If, however, the attribute is not understood to have a real reference, it will carry no such implication. In contending that the predication of attributes does imply composition, Maimonides must have assumed that attributes do have some real reference;<sup>52</sup> in this he followed Avicenna who had taken a nonnominalist, although not Platonic, position on universals.<sup>53</sup> In opposition, though, Averroes and his followers, including Gersonides, maintained that the distinctions involved in the predication of attributes are purely nominal and imply no real difference in their subject.<sup>54</sup>

Since Shalom repeats Maimonides' contention that the predication of the first three types of attribute would be incompatible with the simplicity of God, we should expect that he also accepts a corresponding theory of universals. But Shalom does not seem to have felt the implication of the argument, for he accepts the view of Averroes and Gersonides that attributes do not necessarily have a real reference, explicitly writing that the predication of any attribute can be compatible with the simplicity of God. Shalom even quotes Averroes and Gersonides to this effect in the course of his defense of Maimonides.

The relevant passages occur when Shalom is defining purely logical distinction, as opposed to real difference. He explains that attributes which are based upon "intellectual distinctions whose difference is only in thought and not in the reality of the essence" do not "involve any implication of plurality in a simple essence."<sup>55</sup> An illustration of the manner in which the mind invents such distinctions without any implication of real composition is quoted by Shalom from Averroes: "A single thing may be considered in so far as something else proceeds from it, and thus be called *powerful* or *efficient*. When it is considered in so far as it chooses [to perform] one of two opposite acts, it is called *willing*. When it is considered in so far as it is conscious of its act, it is called *knowing*."<sup>56</sup> Since all of these terms are merely distinctions invented by the observer, Shalom holds, they do not necessarily involve composition. Still quoting Averroes, he proceeds to

<sup>50</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 206b: יהיה . . . אם כן . . . יעצמותו מורכבת מתארים מתחלפים נבדלים.

<sup>51</sup> See above, p. 30.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Munk, *Guide*, I, 262, n. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. C. Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, II, second edition (Leipzig, 1885), 355-357; H. A. Wolfson, "Avicenna, Algazali, and Averroes on divine attributes," *Homenaje a Millás-Vallcorosa*, II (Barcelona, 1956), 548.

<sup>54</sup> See below, nn. 56, 58, 60.

<sup>55</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 207b: כלל לפי הפשוטה באותה העצמות השווה כלל לפי שאלו כלם הם בחינות שכליות והחלוקה הוא מצד ההשכלה לא מצד מציאות אותה העצמות.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, quoting Averroes, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, edited by M. Bouyges (Beyrouth, 1930) VI, 8, p. 314: וכאשר יבחן מצד בחירת אחת משתי הפעולות המקבילות יקרא רוצה וכשיבחן מצד השיגו לפעלו יקרא יודע.



In this connection Shalom also cites two passages from Gersonides, without, however, indicating his source, perhaps because Gersonides' intention was nothing less than to refute Maimonides' position. Gersonides endeavored to show that no composition in the subject is implied by ordinary descriptive statements, and Shalom quotes him as follows: "The composition in question, if indeed it is to be called composition, is only in discourse, by no means in external reality. . . . Take, for example, our description of a particular occurrence of redness: 'It is a color which is red.' This does not imply that the redness in question is composed of *color* and *red*; for *color* is not something actually existing as a subject of redness, but is the subject only in discourse."<sup>58</sup> Although other allusions have been discovered in the original statement of Gersonides,<sup>59</sup> on the surface it asserts only that grammatical distinctions need not correspond to any real objective difference; clearly this is what is intended by Shalom in his quotation. Shalom draws another illustration from Gersonides: "Take, for example, the following description of the intelligence which moves the sphere of the sun: 'It is the intelligence which knows the philosophic order from which the movements of the sphere proceed.' This statement indicates no plurality at all [although it says several things about the intelligence]. For the subject is a subject only in discourse not in reality."<sup>60</sup>

The fourth type of attribute in Maimonides' classification is relation, which Maimonides subdivided into "correlation" and "some relation."<sup>61</sup> Maintaining a view that was apparently unique, Maimonides held that divine attributes may not be interpreted as either type of relation, and Shalom defends Maimonides' position as he understands it.<sup>62</sup>

לא יכחישהו שום פילוסוף בשכבר נאמר בדבר שהוא נמצא אחד ואפשר או מחוייב . . . וכיוצא <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*: במאלו התארים לא יתייבו שום רבוי באותה העצמות הפשוטה כלל

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 206a, quoting M. H. III, 3, 135-136: הרכבה היא הרכבה במאמר כלל . . . כי כשאמר דרך משל באדמיות המזון אליו שהוא מראה אדם הנה לא חייב מפני זה שיהיה האדמיות מורכב מהמראה והאדם שאין המראה דבר נמצא נושא לאדם במציאות אבל נושא במאמר לבד.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. H. A. Wolfson, "Maimonides and Gersonides on Divine Attributes as Ambiguous Terms," *Mordecai Kaplan Jubilee Volume* (New York, 1953), p. 526.

[illegible]

<sup>61</sup> See above, pp. 28-29.

<sup>62</sup> On the uniqueness of Maimonides' position concerning correlation, cf. Wolfson, "Maimonides' Division of Attributes," *Essays . . . in Memory of Linda R. Miller*, p. 227.

between God and other beings since "He is necessarily existent while everything else is only possibly existent."<sup>63</sup> Shalom understands that the reciprocity and interdependence involved in this type of attribute is in any case only terminological.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, in order to defend Maimonides who ruled out the interpretation of divine attributes as correlations, Shalom lays down the rule that not even the terms that are predicated of God may be dependent on something outside of Him. He writes: "Ordinarily each correlate equally lends the correlative term to the other, so that when the correlation disappears, the term which signifies the correlation also disappears";<sup>65</sup> but any term predicated of God must be applicable "even when a correlation is not present."<sup>66</sup> Consequently, he concludes that "the relation (*seruf*) between God and His creatures is not reciprocal";<sup>67</sup> in other words, no proper correlation may be understood to be predicated of God.

Maimonides also rejected the interpretation of a divine attribute as what he called "some relation," by which he appears to have meant Aristotle's numerical relation.<sup>68</sup> Maimonides argued that since "some relation" is possible only between things which belong to the same ultimate species, none can obtain "between God and any of His creatures, considering the great difference in the very nature of their existence, a difference which cannot be exceeded."<sup>69</sup> The great difference consists in the fact that "God is necessarily existent, while everything else is possibly existent."<sup>70</sup> This argument, together with another from the infinite nature of God, was given by Crescas as grounds for ruling out the similarity of God, similarity, as has been seen, being just one type of numerical relation.<sup>71</sup> Crescas wrote that the reason for the dissimilarity of God is that between divine and human perfection "there exists an enormous difference, both in their respective necessary and possible existence, and in their finitude and infinity."<sup>72</sup> Rephrasing Crescas' statement and referring it back to relation (*yahas*), Shalom writes: "There are two reasons for the absence of a relation between God and His creatures. The first is that God is necessarily existent while everything else is possibly existent. . . . The second is . . . that God is infinite while everything else is finite."<sup>73</sup> The second of these reasons, although not explicit in Maimonides, is ascribed to him by Shalom: "Maimonides argued . . . that man is finite, and the finite cannot describe the infinite."<sup>74</sup>

In a passage already quoted, Shalom rules out every correlation embracing God, but

<sup>63</sup> M. N. I, 52, 73b-74a: המציאה ומה שזולתו אפסר המציאה.

<sup>64</sup> See above, p. 29.

<sup>65</sup> See below, n. 67.

<sup>66</sup> See next note.

<sup>67</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 203b: שזולת לפי שזולת לא יהיה ההתהפכות בשווי לפי שזולת: והצרוף שיש בינו יתברך ובין בראיו לא יהיה ההתהפכות בשווי לפי שזולת: שכל אחד מהמצטרף נותן השם הצרוף ימצאו לו השמות המורים על הצרוף מה שאין כן בשאר המצטרפים שכל אחד מהמצטרף נותן השם הצרוף לחבירו בשוה ועל יחס אחד ובהסתלק היחס הצרוףי הוא יסתלק השם המורה על הצרוף.

<sup>68</sup> See above, p. 29.

<sup>69</sup> M. N. I, 52, 74a: באמיתת המציאות הגדול ההפרש עם המצטרף. On the former point, cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X, 4, 1055a, 6-7.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 73b-74a: המציאה אפסר שזולתו ומה שזולתו אפסר המציאה.

<sup>71</sup> See above, p. 29.

<sup>72</sup> O. H. I, iii, 3, 23b: בחיוב המציאות ואפשרותו ואם בתכלית.

<sup>73</sup> רוב"ח.

<sup>74</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 204b: להיותו מחוייב. שסבת העדר היחס בינו יתברך ובראיו הוא לשתי סבות האחת להיותו מחוייב. המציאות והשאר אפסר המציאות . . . הב' להעדר היחס הוא להיותו יתברך בלתי בעל תכלית והשאר בעל תכלית.

<sup>75</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 208a: לפי שאנחנו בעל תכלית והב' לא יוכל לתאר הבב'.



does suggest that a nonreciprocal "relation" or, more literally, "correlation" (*seruf*) may obtain between God and His creatures.<sup>75</sup> On its face, that passage involves a contradiction since every correlation is necessarily reciprocal.<sup>76</sup> What Shalom must therefore mean is that some sort of loosely construed correlation may be predicated of God. Now again, when speaking of the relation (*yahas*) which implies similarity, that is, numerical relation, he writes that it was only a "true and absolute relation" that Maimonides ruled out as an attribute of God.<sup>77</sup> In both of these passages Shalom clearly disallows the predication of relations of God only when they are strictly or truly construed. In other words, it is not the terms but the strict interpretation of them that Shalom disallows. In this he may well be going beyond Maimonides' position. Nevertheless there is a passage where Maimonides spoke of "imaginary relations" which are predicated of God in Scripture,<sup>78</sup> and that may have suggested to Shalom that loose or untrue relations comprehending God may be permitted.

The fifth type of attribute in Maimonides' classification is that of action. It has already been seen that Shalom reflects Maimonides' distinction of the attribute of action from the other attributes, by terming the former *nonessential*.<sup>79</sup> Following Maimonides, he now also maintains that it alone of the five types of attribute may be understood to be predicated of God.

The virtue of the attribute of action, according to Maimonides, is that it does not involve any such reference to a real element in the subject described, as is involved by the first three types of attribute; consequently, it does not violate the simplicity of God. Shalom quotes Maimonides on this point, explaining that when attributes of action are predicated, it should be understood that "the different actions are not performed by different elements in the essence of the agent."<sup>80</sup> Properly, then, descriptions of God should be made only in the form of this type of attribute. Since it happens that Scripture includes descriptions of God in other forms, Maimonides explained that those should be reinterpreted as if they were, in fact, attributes of action.<sup>81</sup> Shalom expresses the same when, dealing with a series of scriptural terms, he quotes Maimonides to the effect that all of the attributes in question "are attributes of God's actions."<sup>82</sup> He also quotes part of Maimonides' explanation of the origin and justification of this type of divine attribute. Maimonides explained that because of the resemblance of divine actions to human actions "whenever an action of God is apprehended, God is described by the attribute from which [in the case of men] that act proceeds."<sup>83</sup> Shalom quotes from the end of this passage: "All of God's acts resemble the acts which proceed from men through the

<sup>75</sup> See above, n. 67.

<sup>76</sup> See above, pp. 28-29, nn. 23-26.

<sup>77</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 203a, giving the converse of the reasoning in M. N. I, 56, 83a: ואחר שהשם אין לו דמיון עם שום דבר כלל אם כן גם כן אין לו יחס עם שום דבר וירצה בזה היחס האמתי המוחלט

<sup>78</sup> M. N. I, 53, 78a: או כפי היחסים המתחלפים בינו ובין הפעולות וכפי מה שבארנו ג'כ מאמתת היחס: יושהוא כפי מחשבת בני אדם Cf. Efodi, *ad loc.*, Munk, *Guide*, I, 215, and D. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre* (Gotha, 1877), p. 402, understand Maimonides' statement differently.

<sup>79</sup> See above, p. 30.

<sup>80</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 207b. See above, p. 30.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. M. N. I, 52, 75a.

<sup>82</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 2, 59b, quoting M. N. I, 54, 82a: כמש"ה ח"א פ' ג"ד וז"ל והכונה כלה שהתארים המיוחסים לו יתברך הם תארי פעולותיו לא שהוא יתברך בעל איכות

<sup>83</sup> M. N. I, 54, 80b-81a: וכל אשר הושגה פעולה מפעולותיו יתואר הוא יתעלה בתאר אשר יבא ממנו והפעל ההוא



affections and dispositions of the human soul. But in God they do not proceed from anything which is added to His essence.”<sup>84</sup>

(b) According to Maimonides the only legitimate way of interpreting descriptions of God affirmatively, is as attributes of action. However, he explained that as an alternative, divine attributes may be interpreted negatively. In other words, while it is improper to describe God with an affirmative term that is not an action, if the affirmative term is reformulated as the negative with the corresponding meaning, or if it is merely understood as if it were so reformulated, then it may be allowed. For example, according to Maimonides the logical proposition “God is knowing” is improper, but one may say “God is not ignorant,” or even “God is knowing,” on the condition that this is understood to mean “God is not ignorant.”<sup>85</sup>

Shalom repeats Maimonides’ insistence upon the use of the negative interpretation of divine attributes as an alternative to the attribute of action, and he also makes a special effort to provide an explanation, based on remarks of Maimonides, of just what is to be gained by recasting affirmative terms into corresponding negatives.

The need for using this interpretation is expressed by Shalom in the remark that all divine attributes “must be negative.”<sup>86</sup> Then he indicates that the negative interpretation is to be considered as an alternative to the interpretation of divine attributes as attributes of action; for he calls a series of scriptural descriptions of God “intellectual distinctions whereby God is described through His actions and negatively.”<sup>87</sup> That is, each of the given scriptural descriptions, which must not be understood as it stands, may either be interpreted as an attribute of action or alternatively as a negative attribute.

Maimonides gave seven illustrations of the negative interpretation of divine attributes,<sup>88</sup> and Shalom repeats them all. In the course of his analysis of Crescas, he quotes the interpretation of the divine attribute “existence” as meaning that “God is not absent” and of the attribute “unity” as meaning that “He is not plural.”<sup>89</sup> Elsewhere, he explains that when the predicate “eternal *a parte ante*” (*qadmon*) is predicated of God, it means that He “has no cause that brought Him into existence.”<sup>90</sup> In addition, Shalom interprets “knowing” as meaning “not ignorant”<sup>91</sup> and mentions as other predicates which should be interpreted negatively when applied to God: “living, . . . powerful, and possessing will.”<sup>92</sup>

The question that asks itself, of course, is just what can be gained by recasting an affirmative term into a corresponding negative, in correcting “God is knowing” to read “God is not ignorant.” Shalom finds the answer in suggestions of Maimonides to the effect, first, that the virtue of the negative predicate lies in its freedom from the implication that the subject is known, then, second, that the negative attribute constitutes an *accidental*

<sup>84</sup> N. Sh. III, 7, 50b, quoting M. N. I, 54, 81a, with a slight difference in text: וכן הפעולות כלם הם דומות לפעולות הבאות מבני אדם על הפעולות ותכונות נפשיות והם באות מאתו ית' לא מענין מוסף על עצמו כלל.

<sup>85</sup> M. N. I, 58.

<sup>86</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 207b.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 206a: הם בחינות שכליות יתואר בהם הש"י מצד פעולותיו ובשלילה.

<sup>88</sup> M. N. I, 58, 86a-b.

<sup>89</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 205b: היותו בלתי נעדר והאחדות על היותו בזולת רבוי.

<sup>90</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 146b: המציאות יורה על היותו בלתי נעדר והאחדות על היותו בזולת רבוי.

<sup>91</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 207a: יודע שהכונה בו שלא יסכל דבר.

<sup>92</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 146b: יודע שהכונה בו שלא יסכל דבר . . . חי . . . יכול ורוצה.





distinction, suggested by Maimonides,<sup>103</sup> between a predication made in an essential manner, and a predication made in an accidental manner. "Anyone," writes Shalom, "who affirms a term in an essential manner must understand it."<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, a formula of the type "God is not ignorant" does not "require that God's knowledge be apprehended since the affirmation is only accidental."<sup>105</sup> In other words, the affirmative predication, which is made in an essential manner, says something about the subject and therefore implies that the subject is known. However, predications using the negative formulas are affirmations in an accidental manner, which seems to mean that they do not really say anything about the subject and thus do not imply that the subject is known.

This, of course, leads to the further question as to what can justify a proposition in which the predicate says nothing about the subject. In answering the question, Shalom suggests that the negative predicate does, after all, say something about the subject although it leaves more unsaid; and it happens that corresponding to what is said and not said by the negative predicate there are two aspects in what might be called the various "perfections" of God,<sup>106</sup> one of which is knowable, and the other of which is unknowable. The negative divine predicate is recommended since it expresses just that aspect of the perfection of God that is knowable, while it does not attempt to express the aspect that is not knowable.

In all of this Shalom seems to take his departure from a remark of Maimonides to the effect that man cannot know "how God's knowledge of things is."<sup>107</sup> Shalom explains: "What we apprehend is that God is not foolish in respect to anything. What we do not apprehend is *how* He knows everything."<sup>108</sup> The same thought seems to be expressed when Shalom writes that just as man "cannot apprehend the essence of God,"<sup>109</sup> although "[His existence] is obvious,"<sup>110</sup> so man cannot know the "manner of God's will,"<sup>111</sup> or the "manner of His knowledge."<sup>112</sup> Here the unknowability of the "manner" of God's will and knowledge is compared with the unknowability of God's essence and contrasted with the obviousness of His existence. This would suggest that the existence or fact, as distinct from the manner, of God's will and knowledge is just as obvious as the existence of God. And, presumably, what Shalom calls an "accidental affirmation" is understood by him to assert the presence of a divine attribute without asserting anything about the "manner" or essence of the attribute.<sup>113</sup> Thus Shalom's explanation would be that in the negative predication of divine attributes an "accidental" affirmation is made and this asserts the presence of a perfection in God without asserting anything about the "manner" or essence of the perfection. In this way the negative predication avoids the

<sup>103</sup> See previous note.

<sup>104</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 207a: *יש המחייב דבר בעצם יחייב שישגהו ואם אין היה החיוב בטל*. Here I have given the term *essential* a different interpretation from that given above, p. 30. Cf. the passage in Maimonides cited in n. 102.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*: *אע"פ שבאמרנו איננו בלתי יודע נחייב שהוא יודע לא יחייב שנשיג אותה הידיעה אחר* *שהחייב הוא במקרה*.

<sup>106</sup> Shalom does not use the term *perfection* in this connection. I have used it on the basis of M. N. I, 53, 78a.

<sup>107</sup> M. N. III, 20, 30a: *הקצור מהשגת ידיעתו בדברים איך הוא*.

<sup>108</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 206a: *מה שנשג הוא ידע כל הדברים*.

<sup>109</sup> See below, n. 111.

<sup>110</sup> See below, n. 112.

<sup>111</sup> N. Sh. I, 6, 5a: *וכשם שלא נשיג עצמותו לא נדע אופן רצונו*.

<sup>112</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 44a: *כאשר נמנע ידיעת עצמותו עם היותו נגלה כך נמנע לדעת אופן ידיעתו איך הוא*.

<sup>113</sup> Julius Guttmann suggested the same interpretation of Maimonides without realizing that it was also Shalom's interpretation. Cf. Guttmann, *Dat u-Madda* (Jerusalem, 1955), p. 111, and n. 6.



pitfall of the affirmative predication, for that would involve an "essential" affirmation and would imply that the "manner" or essence of the divine perfection, and therefore of the deity Himself, is known.

Shalom does not explain how man can, in fact, know that these divine perfections, whose essence is unknowable, are present in God. But in accordance with his statement that negative divine attributes are "intellectual distinctions" of the same nature as attributes of action,<sup>114</sup> we may suppose that he considers this knowledge to be based upon distinctions drawn by men from an observation of the effects of divine causality in the universe.

(c) In conjunction with his views on the interpretation of divine attributes as negative terms and as actions, Maimonides had also argued that any attribute predicated of God must be understood as an equivocal term.<sup>115</sup> According to Maimonides' own definition: "A purely equivocal term is one which is predicated of two essences which have nothing at all in common that might be the reason for their having the common name."<sup>116</sup> Thus, in maintaining that divine attributes are predicated equivocally, Maimonides meant that their meaning has nothing in common with the meaning that they have when predicated of the other things in the universe. Maimonides' position was opposed to that of Alfarabi, Avicenna, Averroes, and, among the Jews, Gersonides. They all understood that divine attributes are ambiguous terms, that is, terms which are predicated of God in a prior or primary sense, and of things which are derived from God in a posterior or secondary sense.<sup>117</sup> For example, God is called *substance* in the most proper sense of the term, while other beings are termed *substance* in a secondary sense, since their substantiality is derived from God. The two views on this question are restated by Shalom. According to Maimonides, he writes, divine attributes are to be understood as "equivocal terms," so that any attribute predicated of God will have "nothing in common" with the same attribute when predicated of man; Gersonides, on the other hand, held that "terms are predicated of God and man according to the manner of priority and posteriority, and not by pure equivocation."<sup>118</sup>

In the statement with which Shalom opens his discussion of divine attributes he writes that the most fundamental issue is just the present question as to whether or not divine attributes are to be construed as equivocal terms, all of the other questions turning on this.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, Shalom does not pursue the subject in terms of the equivocal nature of divine attributes, being drawn instead into a rebuttal of the various other objections made by Gersonides and Crescas. Presumably he thought that by defending Maimonides on other points he was defending him on this point also. Still, in a completely different

<sup>114</sup> See above, n. 87.

<sup>115</sup> M. N. I, 56.

<sup>116</sup> Maimonides, *Millot ha-Higgayon*, chap. 13: שנים שני עצמות: 13. השם המשותף הגמור הוא הנאמר על שני עצמות: 13. אין שותף ביניהם בענין מן הענינים כלל אשר בעבורו ישתתפו בשם הזה.

<sup>117</sup> The sources for the positions of Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes are cited and analyzed by Wolfson, "Maimonides and Gersonides on Divine Attributes," *Mordecai Kaplan Volume*, pp. 517-519. Gersonides discusses the question in M. H. III, 3, 132-137.

<sup>118</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 1, 199a: והמחלוקת הוא אם הדברים המתוארים נאמרים בו יתברך ובנו בשותף גמור או בקדימה ואחור ומן הדבר האחד נקח ראיה על כלם. והרב אמר ח' פ"ב כי כשם שאין שותף בין עצמנו ועצמו יתברך כן אין שותף בין ידיעתו וידיעתנו ולפי דעתו זה פסק ואמר שהתארים שנתאר לו בהם הם שוללים לא חיוביים. אמנם מי שיבין שהדברים נאמרים בו ית' ובנו בקדימה ואחור לא בשותף גמור כהרלב"ג והאוחזים דרכו יאמרו שיש לו תארים עצמיים וחיוביים.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*







declare anything about the essence."<sup>128</sup> He also compares the tetragrammaton with the terms "upright of stature" and "risible."<sup>129</sup> *Uprightness of stature* and *risibility* were understood to be properties of man,<sup>130</sup> so that Shalom must take the tetragrammaton as designating a property of God; and since he follows Maimonides in writing that the "tetragrammaton signifies necessary existence," he must understand *necessary existence* to be the property in question. In another passage, Shalom appears to refer to other divine properties. He is dealing with the type of distinction which exists only in the mind; to illustrate it, he cites the distinction between "the subject and its unique property," explaining: "The quiddity of *man*, and the quiddity of *risibility*, which is his unique property, differ from one another in the mind, although they are in reality one. In the same way, we maintain, the *wisdom*, *power* and *will* of God necessarily differ in quiddity from one another when taken abstractly in the mind, without this entailing that they differ in the real essence of God."<sup>131</sup> The analogy drawn here indicates that Shalom understands *wisdom*, *power*, and *will*, and presumably would understand similar terms, to denote properties of God.

*Summary.*—The defense of Maimonides offered by Shalom touches upon all of the key points in Maimonides' discussion of divine attributes, and at some points involves an interpretation. Shalom follows Maimonides in disallowing the interpretation of any divine attribute as a definition, part of a definition, or quality of God. In support of this view he repeats Maimonides' arguments. The force of one of those arguments is removed, however, when Shalom writes that attributes may be interpreted as nominal terms and thus avoid the implication of composition in their subject. Relation, the fourth attribute in Maimonides' classification, is also disallowed by Shalom, but here he makes the reservation that a nonreciprocal, or untrue, or nonabsolute relation may be predicated of God.

All of this is only preliminary to Shalom's defense of Maimonides' assertion that when divine attributes are taken affirmatively they must be interpreted as actions. Still, although ostensibly Shalom defends that assertion categorically, on one point his thought is uncertain since he suggests that at least certain attributes may be understood as properties of God, and this would be an additional affirmative interpretation.

When recommending the negative interpretation, Shalom takes his departure from certain of Maimonides' remarks and shows that the virtue of this interpretation lies in its freedom from the implications that the essence of God is known; then playing on certain phrases of Maimonides, he explains that this formulation involves an "accidental" affirmation which in some way asserts the presence of an attribute without revealing its essence or "manner."

<sup>128</sup> See next note.

<sup>129</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 3, 202a: יודוע שהוראת עצם הדבר יבחן בשתי בחינות אם מצד ההבדל שלא ישתתף בו זולתו כאמרנו באדם שהוא נצב הקומה או צוחק שאלו ההבדלים יורו על האדם מצד שלא ישתתף בהם זולתו . . . אף כי לא יודיעו דבר מעצמותו. הבחינה השנית . . . כאמרנו באדם מדבר . . . והנה אופן הבחינה הראשונה אמר הרב ז"ל שהשם המפורש יורה על עצמו.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. *Millot ha-Higgayon*, chap. 10.

<sup>131</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 4, 206b: וכן הנושא והתפעלותו המיוחד כמו האדם דרך משל והצחוק שהוא התפעלותו המיוחד לו, יתחלק מהות אחד מהם למהות האחר בשכל, והם אחדים במציאות. ולכן נאמר שהחכמה והיכולת והרצון כשילקחו מופשטים בשכל יתחלק מהות כל א' מהם למהות האחר בהכרח ולא יחוייב מפני זה שיתחלפו במציאות עצמותו יתברך.

The way in which Shalom builds upon even casual suggestions shows that he made a very careful study of Maimonides' discussion. However, there are places where he has clearly failed to grasp its full intent. Examples are his failure to define the precise character of the attribute of action, and his remarks on the nominal nature of attributes and on divine properties.



# THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

*The celestial world.*—Repeating a statement found in Maimonides and other writers, Shalom writes that the universe outside of God consists of three “parts” or “worlds” (*‘olamot*):<sup>1</sup> “the world of the intelligences,”<sup>2</sup> or “angels”;<sup>3</sup> “the world of the spheres”; and “the lower world.”<sup>4</sup> These three parts are described by Shalom as constituting a single entity or organism. The former description appears when he is dealing with an objection raised by Crescas against Gersonides. In the course of solving the difficulty in question, Shalom writes that the different species and genera in the universe are joined in a hierarchy in which the higher is the “perfection” or “entelechy” of the “lower”; then, treating a further point, he explains that even at the lowest levels, where the species are coördinate with one another, the universe is still joined into a single whole “by a force which joins its parts and preserves its species and individuals.”<sup>5</sup> Shalom’s reference to the organic nature of the universe appears in the following quotation from Maimonides: “Without doubt, the outer sphere and everything contained within it constitute a single individual just as, for example, Simon and Reuben do.”<sup>6</sup> Using one other common metaphor, Shalom explains that the unity of the world derives from a plan of it in the mind of God, the case being similar to “the order in an army which proceeds from the order which exists [as an object of thought] in the soul of the commander.”<sup>7</sup>

30D-31A. For the converse notion of man as a microcosm, see below, Chap. V, n. 1.  
 7 N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 116a: ששפע הסודר בצבא לש"י כמו שישפע המושל והסודר שבכאן שופע מהסודר המושלל. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 10, 1075a, 13-15; Averroes, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, III, p. 192, lines 1-4.



The existence of the celestial spheres and the intelligences was assumed in order to explain the observed movements of the stars. According to Maimonides, these astronomical considerations may imply the existence of no fewer than fifty spheres, although by taking some of them in combination, the number can be reduced to ten.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, Shalom speaks of ten concentric spheres which comprise the "intermediate world."<sup>9</sup> He names them as follows: "the peripheral sphere which contains no stars,"<sup>10</sup> also called the "diurnal sphere,"<sup>11</sup> that is, the "sphere which effects the daily motion [of the heavens]";<sup>12</sup> "the sphere of the fixed stars"; "the sphere[s] of the five planets"; "the sphere of the sun"; "the moon"; "the lower world."<sup>13</sup> Here Shalom has located the sun and moon below the other five planets, such, according to Maimonides, being their most probable position.<sup>14</sup> However, Maimonides also mentioned another scheme, identified by him as that of Ptolemy, in which the sun is located as the middle planet, with the moon, Venus, and Mercury below it, and the other three planets above.<sup>15</sup> Shalom recognizes that this latter scheme is Ptolemaic and, because of its symmetry, adopts it in one passage. He writes: "The sun is in the middle of the seven planets; three planets, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, are above, and three, Mercury, Venus, and the moon, are below."<sup>16</sup>

The rotations of the heavens, Maimonides had maintained, imply three things: that each sphere has a soul which is the efficient cause of its motion; that it has an intellect which directs its motion; and that outside of each sphere there is a separate intelligence which is the object of desire of the soul of the sphere and thereby serves as the final cause of its motion.<sup>17</sup> That is to say, each sphere has a soul and intellect of its own, the totality of these comprising the middle part of the universe; in addition, there is an intelligence presiding over each sphere, the totality of these comprising the highest of the three parts of the universe.<sup>18</sup> Certain statements of Shalom reflect this scheme. Shalom writes for example that in the "intermediate world" of the spheres there exists "perfect intellect,"<sup>19</sup> as well as the "soul of the sphere."<sup>20</sup> Then in the "highest world" there are to be found

<sup>8</sup> M. N. II, 4, 20a.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. below, n. 19.

<sup>10</sup> See below, n. 13.

<sup>11</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 176b: הגלגל . . . היומי.

<sup>12</sup> N. Sh. II, 8, 36a: הפועל התנועה היומית.

<sup>13</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 2, 58b: וכדור הכוכבים וכדור השמש והירח . . . זה העולם "peripheral sphere" within the sphere of the fixed stars, which would be a contradiction in terms. Conceivably, he has in mind the thesis, defended by Gersonides (M. H. V, ii, 4, 197-199), that the sphere of the fixed stars is the outermost sphere while the diurnal sphere is second. However, on p. 176b Shalom writes that the diurnal sphere is outermost, and on the basis of that passage I have readjusted his present statement.

<sup>14</sup> M. N. II, 9, 25a.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Handbuch der Astronomie [Almagest]* IX, 1 (translated by K. Manitius [Leipzig, 1912-1913], II, 93); Munk, *Guide*, II, 81, n. 5. This order of the planets is first reported in the name of the Stoic philosopher, Diogenes of Babylon. Cf. J. L. E. Dreyer, *A History of the Planetary Systems from Thales to Kepler* (Cambridge, England, 1906), republished as *A History of Astronomy . . .* (New York, 1953), pp. 168-170.

<sup>16</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 6, 136a: שהנה בטלמיוס הכריח . . . שהוא הנאות בענין הטבעי שיהיה השמש באמצע: [לנה, כוכב, לבנה] שלשה כוכבים למעלה הימנו והם שצ"ם [שבתאי, צדק, מאדים] ושלשה למטה והם נכ"ל [נה, כוכב, לבנה].

<sup>17</sup> M. N. II, 4, 18a-19a.

<sup>18</sup> The diverse statements of Aristotle on this subject as well as some of the medieval references are cited by Munk, *Guide*, II, 51, n. 4.

<sup>19</sup> N. Sh. IX, 4, 157b: בעולם האמצעי . . . שכל שלם.

<sup>20</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 4, 128a: שהתנועה הגלגלית תורה על הציור השכלי שלנפש הגלגל. For the term *siyyur* in this passage, cf. M. N. II, 4, 18b.



"intelligences";<sup>21</sup> these, being an "object of desire," serve as the "final cause" of the motion of the spheres.<sup>22</sup>

Again repeating a common view, Shalom describes both intelligences and spheres as imperishable, the reason being that they do not contain any possible "causes of corruption," that is, "a contrariety."<sup>23</sup> However, although similar in this way, the intelligences and spheres are described as differing in another. The intelligences, Shalom explains, are "unchangeable" in every respect; the spheres, however, while "unchangeable in their substance" perform a rotating motion and therefore are "changeable in respect to place."<sup>24</sup> Since Shalom believes in the creation of the universe, he stresses that the eternal existence of the intelligences and spheres is limited to future time. Interpreting the verse "I am God the first and I am with the last,"<sup>25</sup> he explains that in the past God alone existed, although He will be "with the last," that is, with the celestial universe which will exist eternally in the future.<sup>26</sup> It will appear that Shalom adds a condition even to the future eternity of the celestial world, for he maintains that this is subject to the pleasure of God.<sup>27</sup>

When describing the causation exercised by the higher parts of the universe upon the lower, Shalom, although believing that the universe was created, does not hesitate to use the term emanation (*shefa'*, *ašilut*); Maimonides had explained that this term is simply used to designate any causation effected by an incorporeal being.<sup>28</sup> Thus Shalom writes in a homily that God "brought all things into existence and emanated upon them whatever goods that they are endowed with."<sup>29</sup> In other passages, he refers to different levels of emanation. At the first stage, the "perfection" of the intelligences is "emanated from the first cause."<sup>30</sup> At the next stage, the spheres "receive emanation" from the world of the intelligences,<sup>31</sup> and "through the emanation of the intelligences" perform their revolutions.<sup>32</sup> At the lowest stage, it is by emanations "from the spheres" that the "government of the lower world" takes place.<sup>33</sup>

The assumption in these passages is that the deity is not the immediate cause of everything in the universe. Still, Shalom explains, God is to be described as the ultimate cause of everything. To illustrate this, he analyzes the process which brings about the burning of something in the lower world. Such an event occurs, he explains, because God caused the existence of the highest intelligible world, the intelligences cause the

<sup>21</sup> N. Sh. IX, 4, 157b: שלם בעולם העליון.

<sup>22</sup> N. Sh. VI, 8, 97a: לתכלית חשוקם שהוא הנבדל.

<sup>23</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 2, 59a, concerning the intelligences: סבות . . . אין בהם סבות ההפסד . . . אלא שכל אחד מהם הוא סבות . . . אלא שכל אחד מהם הוא סבות ההפסד שנים והם הכחניות וההפכיות כבר אפשר . . . לקנות ההרה הנצחיות . . . כל שכן ההרה השלם הבלתי מורכב מהפכיות כלל Cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo* I, 3, 270a, 12-22; M. N. II, 14 (c), 32a-b.

<sup>24</sup> N. Sh. II, 4, 30b: הגרמים אינם משתנים בעצמם ואם כבר יקרה בהם השנוי . . . השכלים בלתי משתנים . . .

מצד האנה

<sup>25</sup> Isa. 41: 4.

<sup>26</sup> N. Sh. I, 10, 12a.

<sup>27</sup> See below, pp. 64-65.

<sup>28</sup> M. N. II, 12, concerning *shefa'* (*faid*).

<sup>29</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 6a: מהטובות להם מה (שהנחה) [שהנחה] מהטובות להם מה (שהנחה) . . . I have emended *hunahu*, which might conceivably mean "are assumed to have," to *huhannu*, "are endowed"; cf. M. N. II, 11, 27b.

<sup>30</sup> N. Sh. II, 4, 30b: השכלים . . . יושפע שלמותם מהסבה הראשונה.

<sup>31</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 6b: הגרמים יקבלו השפע מהשכלים.

<sup>32</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 175a: משפע השכלים יפעלו הגלגלים פעולותיהם.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 176a, quoting M. N. II, 10, 25b: הנהגת זה העולם התחתון היא בכחות השופעות מהגלגלים: Cf. below, pp. 50, 51, 52.



middle world of spheres to perform their motions, and these, in turn, produce fire in the lower world. Therefore, it may be said that it is God who causes something to burn "through the intermediacy of fire."<sup>34</sup>

In these passages Shalom deals with efficient causation in the universe and identifies God as the ultimate efficient cause. Elsewhere, he seems to allude to the doctrine that God is the final cause of the universe, and he explicitly quotes Maimonides to the effect that God is its formal cause. According to Maimonides, the description of God as a final cause (*taklit*) means that the universe exists only because He wills its existence.<sup>35</sup> Quite probably with this explanation in mind Shalom writes that "God acts by His will and with the purpose (*taklit*) of beneficence."<sup>36</sup> Further, according to Maimonides, God is called the formal cause of the universe because it is preserved in existence by Him, just as the quiddity and nature of a thing is preserved by its form.<sup>37</sup> Paraphrasing Maimonides, Shalom similarly writes: "God is the ultimate form of the world whereby the true nature of the world and its quiddity are preserved."<sup>38</sup>

Shalom takes special pains to define the precise sense in which God may be said to preserve the world in existence. He finds that a remark of Crescas implies the view "of the heretic Albalag in his commentary on Algazali's *Intentiones*"; Albalag "assumed a continuous creation of the world which never ceases,"<sup>39</sup> that is, he maintained that the world is reëmanated afresh by God at every moment. Against this view Shalom cites an argument of Gersonides showing that the world would have to be destroyed at every moment if it were to be regenerated, this being absurd.<sup>40</sup> Further, he argues that it is also absurd to suppose that God failed to give the world a measure of existence sufficient to preserve it.<sup>41</sup> And not the least consideration is that this is "not the view of our Torah and of true tradition."<sup>42</sup> When Shalom contrasts the view which he rejects with that which he considers to be correct, his distinction turns out to be exceedingly fine. He explains that there is a "great difference between the preservation of a thing's existence once it has acquired it, and the continual emanation of existence."<sup>43</sup> His own position is that the universe is not sustained by a continuing "emanation of existence" but by a continuing "emanation of a preservation of existence."<sup>44</sup> In other words, God should be understood as continually preserving the universe through an emanation, but not as continually reëmanating the universe itself.

*Philosophic problems concerning the celestial world.*—The general scheme of the celestial universe which has just been outlined was more or less commonplace and therefore is

<sup>34</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 3, 210b: *הוא שורף באמצעות האש והאש יתנועע באמצעות תנועת הגלגל כן*. The example is from M. N. II, 4, 20b. For the theory, cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* II, 2, 994a, 5-8; M. N. I, 69, 103a.

<sup>35</sup> M. N. I, 69, 104a. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* II, 2, 994a, 8-10; 994b, 9-11.

<sup>36</sup> N. Sh. I, 8, 8a: *כי הוא יתברך פועל ברצונו לתכלית ההטבה*.

<sup>37</sup> M. N. I, 69, 103b. Cf. *Metaphysics* II, 2, 994b, 16-21, with a different sense.

<sup>38</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 125b: *שהוא יתברך צורת העולם האחרונה שבו תתקיים אמתת העולם ומהותו וכמו*. שאמר הרב

<sup>39</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 22a: *ונטה בזה לדרך אלבלג הכופר בפירושו לכונות שהגיה חדוש העולם התמידי שלא*. סר ולא יסור

<sup>40</sup> N. Sh. I, 9, 11b. Cf. M. H. VI, i, 7, 313.

<sup>41</sup> N. Sh. I, 9, 11b.

<sup>42</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 22a: *מה שאין כן דעת תורתנו וקבלתנו האמתית*.

<sup>43</sup> N. Sh. I, 10, 12a: *ההפרש הגדול שבין התמדת המציאות לדבר אחר שקבלו ובין השפע המציאות ההוא*. מהשופע תמיד

<sup>44</sup> N. Sh. I, 12, 18a: *שיש הפרש גדול בין שפע המציאות לדבר ובין שפע התמדת אותו המציאות עליו*.



taken for granted by Shalom.<sup>45</sup> Almost all of his references to it are casual, usually appearing in the homiletic sections of his book. Certain technical questions concerning individual points within this scheme had become subjects of debate, however, and some of these are discussed by Shalom in detail. We shall give a brief statement of his position on these questions.

One such question concerned the technicalities of the process whereby the universe was understood to have been emanated from God. Shalom gives an exposition of the theories of Avicenna and Averroes, but adopts what is, in effect, the position of Gersonides.

Avicenna's theory<sup>46</sup> recommended itself to Shalom, since it had been presented by Maimonides as the official philosophic theory of emanation.<sup>47</sup> At its heart lay the attempt to harmonize the emanation of the universe from God, with the principle that "from a simple being only one simple being can necessarily proceed."<sup>48</sup> This principle would imply that from God and from each successive intelligence, only a single incorporeal intelligence could be emanated. Since the universe obviously does not consist solely in a series of incorporeal intelligences, the present theory undertook to explain how the complexity and corporeality of the universe could have arisen. The main point of Avicenna's solution is quoted by Shalom from Maimonides: Greater and greater degrees of complexity arise to "the degree that the intelligences are removed" from God.<sup>49</sup> That is to say, while God is absolutely simple, the first intelligence which proceeds from Him has a certain aspect of plurality; for in contrast to God who thinks only Himself, this first intelligence would have both itself and its cause as the objects of its thought. From this plurality of aspects in the first intelligence, it was maintained, there emanated both a second incorporeal intelligence and also the first, outermost sphere. Shalom explains the process as follows: "Insofar as the intelligence has intellectual thought of its cause, there necessarily proceeds from it another intelligence; and insofar as it thinks itself, there proceeds from it a sphere, that is, a simple body."<sup>50</sup> Since this second intelligence would contain the same plurality of aspects which were found in the first, it would be able to produce a third intelligence as well as a second sphere. As the process continues, Shalom explains, there would be produced the full complement of intelligences and spheres and then, as the final stage of emanation, the lower world.<sup>51</sup>

Shalom understands that the theory of Avicenna just outlined was "not the view of

<sup>45</sup> One question which was debated was whether there is to be found both a soul and intellect in the spheres. Cf. above, n. 17, and, for one of the discussions which was likely to have been known by Shalom, M. H. V, iii, 6, 263 ff. Gersonides maintained that the spheres have only an intellect and do not have a soul.

<sup>46</sup> The theory had previously been propounded by Alfarabi, 'Uyūn al-Masā'il, edited by Dieterici in *Alfarabi's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, p. 58, line 21-p. 59, line 9. Shalom (21b) cites the theory in the name of Avicenna and Algazali.

<sup>47</sup> M. N. II, 22, 47b-48a.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 47b: יהדבר הפשוט אי אפשר שיתחייב ממנו אלא פשוט אחד. Aristotle stated the analogous proposition that "the same cause, provided it remain in the same condition, always produces the same effect" (*De Gen. et Corr.* II, 10, 336a, 27-28). Cf. also Munk, *Guide*, II, 172, n. 1. The proposition, in the form stated by Maimonides, and as the source of the medieval problem of emanation, seems first to have appeared in Plotinus, *Enneades*, edited by P. Henry and H. Schwyzler (Brussels, 1959), V, 1, 6, lines 4-6; V, 2, 1, lines 3-4. For an analysis of the entire problem see Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 282-284.

<sup>49</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 21b, quoting M. N. II, 22, 48a: השכלים כל אשר ירחקו יתחדש בהם הרכבת עניינים.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: מה שישכיל עלתו יתחייב ממנו שכל ומצד מה שישכיל עצמו יתחייב ממנו גלגל שהוא גשם פשוט.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*



Aristotle.”<sup>52</sup> The correct interpretation of Aristotle is found by him in the theory presented by Averroes in *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. There Averroes rejected the notion of an emanation in the sense of a procession (*ṣudūr*) of corporeal being from the incorporeal.<sup>53</sup> Instead, he explained that the first principle, or God, is the cause of the existence of the universe only in the sense that it is He who imposes unity upon its disparate elements.<sup>54</sup> Repeating the words of Averroes, Shalom also explains that on the correct interpretation of Aristotle, the deity is the “single being from whom there emanates a single force” which imposes a unity upon the universe and everything within it; God may still be called the cause of the existence of the universe inasmuch as it is through this force or unity which proceeds from Him that “every existent thing exists.”<sup>55</sup>

Although understanding this theory to be the correct interpretation of Aristotle, Shalom rejects it also. The view which he adopts is that of Gersonides, according to which God is the immediate cause not merely of the unity in the universe or of the first intelligence, but rather of the entire world of the intelligences.<sup>56</sup> The intelligences, Shalom writes, are not “causes of one another” as they were described by Avicenna, but were all “created by God” and are direct results of His voluntary action.<sup>57</sup> The hierarchical order among the intelligences, which is explained by the assumption that they have knowledge of different parts of the universe,<sup>58</sup> is also attributed by Shalom to the immediate voluntary action of God.<sup>59</sup> As for the lower parts of the universe, Shalom seems to retain the view that the world of the spheres is emanated from the intelligences, while the sublunar world is emanated from the world of the spheres.<sup>60</sup>

In the theory of Avicenna, the first sphere is understood to be a product of the first intelligence; no sphere is governed by God, who instead stands beyond the entire system of intelligences and spheres.<sup>61</sup> Averroes, on the other hand, maintained that the outermost sphere is moved by the deity Himself, not by an emanated intelligence.<sup>62</sup> Shalom refers to this dispute in several passages, but instead of taking a firm stand, he makes statements in accordance with both views. In a casual context he takes the position of Avicenna that God stands beyond the movers of the spheres, writing that it is the “first caused” intelligence which is the mover of the outermost sphere.<sup>63</sup> Elsewhere, however, he analyzes the question at some length and comes to the opposite conclusion. He claims that Maimonides cannot serve as an authority here, since in one passage he had explicitly

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*: אמנם אין זה דעת ארסטו. However, see below, p. 50.

<sup>53</sup> Averroes, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, edited by Bouyges, III, p. 186, lines 4-6.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, III, p. 180, line 12-p. 181, line 10; *et passim*.

<sup>55</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 21b-22a: הנה מבואר שהיה נמצא א' ישפע ממנו כח אחד בו ימצאו כל הנמצאות וזהו דעת ארסטו. The statement appears in *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, III, p. 181, lines 12-13. Shalom, however, without indicating his source, is quoting from Narboni's commentary on *Guide*, edited by J. Goldenthal (Vienna, 1852), p. 35a, where a number of passages from Averroes have been pieced together to form a complete statement of the theory.

<sup>56</sup> M. H. V, iii, 8, 273.

<sup>57</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 2, 58b-59a: ונבראו מאתו . . . אלו השכלים הנבדלים בהשגותיהם מתחלה שהוא צוה . . . ונבראו . . . ולכן לא יצטרך להניח אותם עלות קצתם לקצת.

<sup>58</sup> Shalom makes this point in order to explain the principle whereby the intelligences are differentiated from one another. Cf. N. Sh. IV, ii, 1; M. H. V, iii, 7.

<sup>59</sup> N. Sh. IV, ii, 2, 58b: שהוא צוה ונבראו רצוני שיהיו מתחלפים במדרגות ושיהיה במושכל הא' מנימוס הנמצאות זולת מה שיהיה המושכל ממנו אצל האחר.

<sup>60</sup> See above, p. 45.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. above, p. 47, and next note.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Munk, *Guide*, II, 57, n. 3.

<sup>63</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 175b: ולפי שהיה העלול הראשון היותר משובח משאר השכלים היה מניע הנגלגל החשוב יותר והוא היומי.



denied that God is the mover of the first sphere,<sup>64</sup> while in other passages he apparently wrote that God is its mover.<sup>65</sup> Shalom himself proceeds to adduce a number of philosophic arguments as well as a Talmudic passage and a scriptural verse which he considers to be relevant to the question.<sup>66</sup> His conclusion here is that God is the mover of the first sphere.<sup>67</sup>

A further question examined by Shalom concerns the substance of the spheres. Aristotle had maintained that this substance differs from that of the sublunar world,<sup>68</sup> and Shalom cites the argument to prove the point: "Since the movement of the sphere is circular and the movement of the elements [in the lower world] is rectilinear, it may be inferred that the matter of the former is not the same as the matter of the latter, and that they belong to different species."<sup>69</sup>

Granted this difference, the precise nature of the substance of the spheres was disputed by the medieval writers. Maimonides followed Avicenna in holding that the celestial spheres, like objects in the lower world, are composed of matter and form, and differ only in that these are different.<sup>70</sup> Averroes, on the other hand, maintained that there is no sense in which the spheres may be said to contain a composition of matter and form.<sup>71</sup> Both of these views are quoted by Shalom who does not explicitly decide between them.<sup>72</sup> However, Shalom does undertake to show that the objections raised by Averroes against the contrary position are not cogent. Averroes' argument, as Shalom quotes it, was as follows: In everything that is composed of matter and form, these two elements must at some time be separated; thus if the spheres were "composed of matter and form," they would be "generated and corruptible" beings, with both a beginning and an end to their existence; observation, however, indicates that the "act" of the spheres, that is, their circular motion, is eternal; therefore, they themselves must be eternal and not composed of matter and form.<sup>73</sup> Shalom replies, first, that the matter and form of the spheres would differ from the matter and form of things in the lower world in being permanently joined to one another; consequently, the spheres need never cease to exist.<sup>74</sup> Then,

<sup>64</sup> M. N. II, 4, 21a.

<sup>65</sup> M. N. I, 70, 104b; II, 1, 13b-14a. These and other passages in Maimonides are discussed by Shalom on pp. 35a, 36a. For an attempt to solve the contradiction in Maimonides, see Munk, *Guide*, I, 28, n. 1. For an interpretation of Maimonides' view, see H. A. Wolfson, "Notes of Proofs of the Existence of God," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, I (1924), 593.

<sup>66</sup> N. Sh. II, 8, 35a-36b.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 35a. There is no indication that Shalom considered this dispute to be of particular religious significance.

<sup>68</sup> Aristotle, *De Caelo* I, 2, 269a, 2-269b, 17.

<sup>69</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 44a, quoting M. N. II, 19, 40a: תנועת הגלגל סבובית ותנועת היסודות ישרה נודע שהחמר ההוא בלתי החמר הזה אבל הם נבדלים במין ובכלל למה שהתבאר פעל הגרם הזה שהוא נצחי. The argument originates in Aristotle, *De Caelo* I, 2, 269a, 2-7, where it is intended to show that the heavens are a simple body (*σώμα ἀπλόον*).

<sup>70</sup> M. N. II, 19, 40a. In *Millot ha-Higgayon*, chap. 9, however, Maimonides took another view, writing that the spheres have matter without form. Cf. M. Mendelssohn's commentary on that passage (Warsaw, 1826), p. 29b. Avicenna's statement of his own view is quoted by Wolfson, *Crescas*, 594-595.

<sup>71</sup> Averroes' statement of his own view is quoted by Wolfson, *Crescas*, 594-597.

<sup>72</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 3; 4.

<sup>73</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 3, 100b, quoting Averroes, *Sermo de Substantia Orbis*, edited by A. Hyman (Harvard University thesis, 1953), p. 9, lines 15-18: ויבטל למה שהתבאר פעל הגרם הזה שהוא נצחי. The argument originates in Aristotle, *De Caelo* I, 2, 269a, 2-7, where it is intended to show that the heavens are a simple body (*σώμα ἀπλόον*). Cf. also Wolfson, *Crescas*, 595-597.

<sup>74</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 3, 101a, with reference to *Mishneh Torah*, *Sefer ha-Madda*, *Hilkot Yesode ha-Torah* II, 3: צורתם גם כן כשאר הצורות. צורתם קבועה במ לעולם.







The definition which he himself cites is that of Averroes, according to which the corporeal form is simply the "three indefinite dimensions" of all material existence.<sup>91</sup>

The complex of corporeal form and prime matter, Shalom explains, receives the forms of the "four elements": earth, water, air, and fire.<sup>92</sup> These elements are described by him as actually existing not in a pure state, but only intermixed with one another.<sup>93</sup> The four elements, in their turn, generate into "inanimate, vegetable, and animal" nature.<sup>94</sup> Shalom explains the cause of this generation into higher forms, in several different ways.<sup>95</sup> In one passage he writes that the generation of higher beings is due simply "to the movement of the sphere," apparently meaning, hereby, the lunar sphere. This is described as causing the mixture of the elements, "some of those which were below being raised, and some of those which were above being caused to descend"; then "light and darkness . . . warmth . . . and cold" operate upon them, changing their "temperaments" and producing various meteorological phenomena.<sup>96</sup> In other passages Shalom describes the generation of matter into its higher forms as being due to the "celestial bodies" (*ha-geramim*) in general, and also to the "movers of the spheres," each of these latter having an assigned "activity" over a segment of the lower world.<sup>97</sup> "The heat of the sun," he again explains, "becomes tempered with the heat of the other stars," and in conjunction they "prepare" matter to receive higher forms.<sup>98</sup> Thereupon, "in accordance with the preparation of the matter" the appropriate forms are "emanated from an incorporeal being."<sup>99</sup> This incorporeal being is the active intellect which in Avicenna's theory has already been seen to be the cause of the existence of prime matter itself.<sup>100</sup>

One topic examined by Shalom at greater length is the cause of specifically biological generation. Gersonides, employing reports which Averroes gave of earlier theories, concluded that the generation of living beings in the lower world is to be explained as due to two principles: the *basic heat* in the seed which enables it to receive the form of a living being, and an incorporeal bestower of forms (*dator formarum*) which imparts a vegetable or animal form when the matter is prepared for it. This incorporeal bestower of forms is again just the active intellect.<sup>101</sup> Shalom, on the basis of a reëxamination of

<sup>91</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 3, 100b: לא ימצא ערום מהמרחקים הבלתי מוגבלים רוצה לומר מציאות המרחקים הג' . . . שבעה מיני הוויות והם ארבע יסודות, והדומם והצומח והחי . . . Cf. Wolfson, *Crescas*, 585-586.

<sup>92</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 7a: והדומם והצומח והחי . . . שבעה מיני הוויות והם ארבע יסודות, והדומם והצומח והחי . . .

<sup>93</sup> N. Sh. I, 16, 27a: יש בהם מההרכבה וההתמזגות משאר היסודות מה שלא יעלה ולכן . . . Cf. Aristotle, *De Gen. et Corr.* II, 8, 334b, 31-32 to which Shalom refers in this passage.

<sup>94</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 7a, quoted above in n. 92.

<sup>95</sup> For Aristotle, the generation of matter into its higher forms was due merely to the movement of the sun; cf. *De Gen et Corr.* II, 10, 336a, 15 ff. The medieval writers, however, also ascribed a role to the other heavenly bodies; cf. Algazali, *Maqāsid*, II, 259; below, nn. 97, 98.

<sup>96</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 7a: למטה ויורידו מאשר למעלה ובאור . . . יבחשך ישתנו מזגיהם . . . והחום ירחיב . . . והקור יקבץ . . . Cf. M. N. II, 19, 39a.

<sup>97</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 176a, following M. H. V, iii, 8, 270-271: והתבאר שכל אחד ממניעי אלו הגלגלים משיג . . . Cf. M. N. II, 19, 39a.

<sup>98</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 115b: השמש המתמזג בחום שאר הכוכבים . . . Cf. M. H. V, ii, 6, 204.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*: הצורות הנאצלות מהנבדל . . . לפי רבוי הכנת החמרים . . .

<sup>100</sup> Cf. M. N. II, 4, 20b. This theory gives Shalom a rationale for miracles. He explains that a miracle is the emanation of a form upon matter which is not prepared to receive it (p. 153a; cf. below, p. 63). Shalom also recognizes the astrological implications of the theory (p. 46a), but repudiates the discipline of astrology as "stupid" (see below, p. 94, n. 24), presumably because of its unreliability.

<sup>101</sup> M. H. V, iii, 5, 256-257; also cf. p. 285. The works of Averroes which Gersonides examines (p. 221) are: *Epitome of De Anima*, *Commentary on De Gen. et Corr.*, *Animalia*, *Commentary on Metaphysics* VII.



Averroes, comes to the conclusion that besides the two factors accepted by Gersonides, a third factor is also operative in biological generation, that is, a "psychic" or "formative power" (*koah nafshi, koah meşayyer*). This psychic power, Shalom explains, is present in vegetable or animal seed; by employing the natural or basic heat of the seed, it prepares the matter so that it may receive a form from the incorporeal bestower of forms. In support of this view, Shalom adduces a number of philosophic arguments as well as several Talmudic passages which he supposes to be relevant.<sup>102</sup>

Another aspect of Aristotle's theory of generation mentioned by Shalom is the function of the "three principles . . . matter, form and privation."<sup>103</sup> An object can generate into a new form, Shalom explains, only when there is present: (a) a "prior privation in the subject," that is, the absence of the new form which is about to be generated; (b) a "subject of generation," that is, a matter to serve as the substratum of the process of generation; and (c) a new "form" which is to appear.<sup>104</sup> On the basis of this well-known Aristotelian analysis, Shalom draws the Aristotelian inference that "everything which is generated must be composed of matter and form."<sup>105</sup> Conversely, "all composite things" are described as "suffering change," and as "liable to corruption."<sup>106</sup> Further, following Aristotle, Shalom describes generation and corruption as one class of change, that is, change in the category of substance.<sup>107</sup> However, he differs in writing that there is also a type of change not only in three, but in each of the other nine categories as well, this being a view which had been stated by the Arabic commentator on Maimonides, Altabrizi.<sup>108</sup>

A number of other Aristotelian conceptions are repeated by Shalom. He distinguishes three kinds of locomotion: "from the periphery [of the lower world] to the center, from the center to the periphery, and around the periphery."<sup>109</sup> He also gives an enumeration of the four causes: "the efficient, . . . the material, . . . the formal, . . . and the final."<sup>110</sup> In referring to the elements, Shalom writes that each has its "peculiar"<sup>111</sup> or "natural place" to which it returns "when the preventative [cause] which forced its absence is removed."<sup>112</sup> Every body "is in place,"<sup>113</sup> and "qua body is finite."<sup>114</sup> Time is "consequent upon motion."<sup>115</sup> The moment "has no existence which is perceptible"; it is the "bound

<sup>102</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 4, 112a.

<sup>103</sup> N. Sh. V, 2, 63a: החמר, והצורה, והעדר . . . שלש התחלות הטבע. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* I, 7, 191a, 8-14.

<sup>104</sup> N. Sh. VII, 6, 114a: הוּא וְנוֹשָׂא הַהוּיָה וְצוּרָה הוּא. Cf. *Physics* I, 7, 190b, 11-13.

<sup>105</sup> N. Sh., *ibid.*: מחמר וצורה. Cf. *Physics* I, 7, 190b, 11.

<sup>106</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 6b: המורכבים ישתנו ויקבלו ההפסד.

<sup>107</sup> N. Sh. X, 8, 185b: תחלה שנה העצם . . . וזהו ההפסד וההווייה הקורה במאמר העצם. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VIII, 1, 1042a, 34-1042b, 2.

<sup>108</sup> N. Sh. X, 8, 185b. Cf. Wolfson, *Crescas*, pp. 504, 507.

<sup>109</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 114b: וסביב המקיף, ומהמרכז למקיף, וממקיף למרכז, שהם מהמקיף למרכז, ומהמרכז למקיף, וסביב המקיף. Cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo* I, 2, 268b, 22-24.

<sup>110</sup> N. Sh. VI, 6, 95a: סבתו הפועלת . . . החמרית . . . הצורית . . . והתכליתית. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* IV, 1, 209a, 20-22, *et passim*. On p. 93a Shalom distinguishes *natural cause* and *divine cause*; cf. Hallevi, *Cuzari* V, 20.

<sup>111</sup> N. Sh. IX, 1, 154a: לכול אחד מהיסודות מקום מיוחד.

<sup>112</sup> N. Sh. II, 1, 53a: היסוד אל מקומו הטבעי בקלות בסור המונע שהכריחו ומנעו זמן מה. Cf. *Physics* VIII, 3, 253b, 33-34; *De Caelo* IV, 3, 310a, 21.

<sup>113</sup> N. Sh. XI, 5, 194b: כל גשם במקום. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XI, 10, 1067a, 28-29.

<sup>114</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 3, 101a: כל גשם בעל תכלית מצד מה שהוא גשם. Cf. *Metaphysics* XI, 10, 1067a, 31; *Physics* III, 5, 204b, 6.

<sup>115</sup> N. Sh. I, 11, 16b-17a: יהזמן נמשך מהתנועה. Cf. *Physics* IV, 10, 219a, 9-10.



of time in respect to its two parts."<sup>116</sup> Time is defined as "the number of motion according to the prior and posterior";<sup>117</sup> it is "not composed of moments,"<sup>118</sup> but is "infinitely divisible" as are motion and the moving body.<sup>119</sup> And lastly "no vacuum exists."<sup>120</sup>

While the conceptions of Aristotelian physics are employed throughout *Neveh Shalom*, in one passage Shalom draws up a series of criticisms of physical science in order to show that human knowledge is inadequate in itself and must be supplemented by revelation. He remarks, probably borrowing in part from Crescas, that there are certain questions in which philosophers had not been able to give a conclusive answer. For example, the accepted view, repeated by Shalom himself, was that the active intellect is the source of the forms of both animate and inanimate beings.<sup>121</sup> Now, however, Shalom writes that it had not after all been sufficiently demonstrated "whether form is [latent] in matter, or is translated from without."<sup>122</sup> Again, while it was the accepted view that a vacuum cannot exist, Shalom writes that this too is problematical; for it might be argued that "since the outer sphere does not move in a *plenum*, it must move in a vacuum."<sup>123</sup> In any case, "most of Aristotle's proofs in this connection are invalid."<sup>124</sup> A third question which according to Shalom had not been answered is "whether the [outer] sphere is [to be described as] existing in place."<sup>125</sup> Here Shalom has in mind the difference of opinion among philosophers concerning the place of the outermost sphere, the controversy having arisen from the fact that Aristotle's definition of place as the inner surface of the surrounding body would be inapplicable in the case of a body which had nothing surrounding it.<sup>126</sup>

*Summary.*—Shalom's remarks on the nature of the universe have been seen to reflect the typical medieval Aristotelian scheme. Shalom views the universe as divided into three sharply distinguished parts: intelligences, concentric spheres, and the sublunar world. Each higher part of the universe is described as being the cause and the governor of what stands beneath it, exercising its power through an emanation; the deity is the ultimate cause of these processes.

While Shalom does not touch upon every point in Aristotle's physics and astronomy, he mentions enough of the main features to allow us to assume that he was familiar with the whole. Several characteristics in Shalom's use of his sources may be mentioned. Here again we find philosophic conceptions appearing in nontechnical contexts and in a way that shows that they have simply been taken for granted.<sup>127</sup> Most of the passages

<sup>116</sup> N. Sh. IX, 9, 169b: משיני קצותיו הזמן המגביל והוא מציאות מורגש והוא המגביל הזמן משני קצותיו Cf. *Physics* IV, 10, 217b, 32-33; 218a, 9.

<sup>117</sup> N. Sh. I, 11, 16b: גדר הזמן שהוא מספר התנועה בקודם ומתאחר Cf. *Physics* IV, 11, 219b, 2.

<sup>118</sup> N. Sh. I, 10, 12b: היות הזמן מחובר מעתות . . . לא יהוייב Cf. *Physics* IV, 10, 218a, 8.

<sup>119</sup> N. Sh. I, 11, 13a: יתחלק בכח למה שיתחלק Cf. *Physics* VI, 4, 235a, 11-16.

<sup>120</sup> N. Sh. VII, 1, 2, 99b: אין הריקות נמצא Cf. *Physics* IV, 8, 216b, 20-21.

<sup>121</sup> Above, pp. 51, 52.

<sup>122</sup> N. Sh. XI, 5, 195a: המחלוקת שנפל בין הפילוסופים [ים] אם הצורה בחמר או נעתקת מחוץ On the latency theory, see S. Pines, *Beiträge zur Islamischen Atomenlehre* (Berlin, 1936), p. 99 and n. 2.

<sup>123</sup> N. Sh., *ibid.*: יתנועע במלוי אם כן בריקות Cf. O. H. I, ii, 1, 188, and Wolfson's notes. Pines, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47, 72, shows this to be typical of a medieval non-Aristotelian, so-called Platonic physics.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*: ירוב מופתי ארסטו על זה בטלים Shalom treats the arguments of Aristotle's *Physics* IV,

8, 215a, 1-14; and 215a, 24-216a, 11. His replies are in effect, although not literally, the same as those of O. H. I, ii, 1, 180 and 182.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*: אם הגלגל במקום אם לא Cf. *Physics* IV, 5, 212b, 10-13; O. H. I, ii, 1, 195.

<sup>126</sup> A discussion of this question is to be found in Wolfson, *Crescas*, pp. 432-440.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. above, pp. 16, 25.



quoted in this chapter are taken from the homiletic sections of *Neweh Shalom*; they thus reveal Shalom reading philosophic notions into Scripture and rabbinic literature without hesitation concerning the possibility of the incorrectness of the former or of anachronism. On the other hand, Shalom does realize that certain questions were at issue, and in discussing these he shows a familiarity with the arguments in favor of the various positions.<sup>128</sup> Still, he does not seem to consider these disputes as of fundamental importance, since he sometimes makes statements in accordance with two conflicting positions or else does not take a stand at all.<sup>129</sup>

A characteristic in Shalom's treatment of these questions which should be stressed is the manner of his citations from scriptural and rabbinic sources. It is impossible to determine whether Shalom really meant to decide these questions on the basis of the religious texts, or whether he is consciously using them as only a support for positions which he took on other grounds. In any case, though, Shalom clearly considered them as authorities on the questions which he treats and certainly conceives of himself as doing more than merely "reading" philosophy into scripture or as "harmonizing" the two.

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<sup>128</sup> Cf. above, pp. 47-50, 51-52.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. above, pp. 48, 49, 50, 53.



## CHAPTER V

# THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

THE PROBLEM of the creation of the world is discussed by Shalom in the first section of his book. He deals with it there because he believes both that creation is the most important problem of religious philosophy and also that it is the subject of the entire Bible. To prove the latter point, he undertakes to show that while only the opening verses of Genesis deal with the creation of the world, all of Scripture is concerned with the creation of man, the "microcosm,"<sup>1</sup> first, in describing his physical creation, then by effecting his religious, intellectual, and moral "creation," through injunction and example.<sup>2</sup>

The object of the philosophic part of Shalom's discussion is to arbitrate between Maimonides' view that the world was created *ex nihilo* and Gersonides' view that the world was created from an eternal, preëxistent, formless matter. He does this by answering all of Gersonides' objections to Maimonides.<sup>3</sup> However, for the sake of completeness he also adds a refutation of Crescas' criticism of both Maimonides and Gersonides.<sup>4</sup> It is only through his exchanges with these two critics that Shalom's own understanding of the problem of creation emerges. Then, however, it appears that he has touched upon every important point in Maimonides' discussion.

We shall examine Shalom's statements under the following headings: the analysis of the various positions on the creation and eternity of the world; replies to the arguments for eternity; philosophic arguments for creation; religious arguments for creation *ex nihilo*; the future eternity of the world.

*The different positions on creation and eternity.*—Maimonides opened his discussion by defining what he considered to be the three main positions: that of Plato, that of Aristotle, and what he called the position of the “Torah,” and defended as the correct view.<sup>5</sup> He also referred to several other unnamed theories, explaining that they are similar to the Platonic position,<sup>6</sup> and in addition mentioned the Epicurean view, only to dismiss it as

<sup>1</sup> The use of the term *microcosm* as a designation for man is reported in the name of Democritus (H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*<sup>8</sup> [Berlin, 1956], II, 153, frag. 34), and appears in Plato (*Timaeus* 44D). Aristotle refers to the designation of animal in general, rather than merely man, as a microcosm (*Physics* VIII, 2, 252b, 26). Cf. Wolfson, *Spinoza*, II, 7, for other references. Shalom learned the analogy from Maimonides' detailed presentation (M. N. I, 72), and, on the basis of Maimonides' statements, holds that since man alone is endowed with reason, he resembles the universe which is also endowed with reason. Cf. N. Sh. I, 2, 1b-2a: "Man alone of the animals was created in complete perfection in respect of his soul, and therefore he is called a microcosm" (וְהָיָה הָאָדָם בְּנֵבֶרֶךְ בְּחִלְתִּי הַשְּׁמֹת מִשְׁרַ הַנִּבְרָאִים מִצֵּד צִוְרוֹ עַד שְׁלֵוֹ נִבְרָא עוֹלָם כֵּטָן).

והתחילה התורה לפרש חדוש העולם הגדול בכללו ובחלקיו ופרסמה גם כן חדוש העולם <sup>2</sup> N. Sh. I, 2, 2a: הקטן כן החורר אנוס במה שבה להקבות דעת אמי ומושכל אל להקבות מעלה מ... אל החסיר העול, וכל זה להשלים העולם הקטן

<sup>3</sup> N. Sh. I, 13.

<sup>4</sup> N. Sh. I, 6-8 deals with Crescas' criticism of Maimonides, and I, 9-12, deals with Crescas' criticism of Gersonides.

<sup>5</sup> M. N. II, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 30b: האפלטון גם כן זו היא כתות אל חלקו אין תועלת לזכרון כחותיהם . . . ואפלטון גם כן זה הוא הכתה וזה החלקים.  
Cf. H. A. Wolfson, "Theories of Creation in Hallevi and Maimonides," *Essays in honour of the Very Rev. Dr. J. H. Hertz* (London, 1942), p. 435.







think of an infinite duration of time before the creation of the world . . . it is only a supposition of time . . . not real time.”<sup>18</sup> In various passages Shalom reproduces these statements: “The truth is as Maimonides wrote. He set two conditions for the proper view of creation: (a) that God created the world in its entirety after absolute nonexistence; (b) that He created it by His will and intention.”<sup>19</sup> “God created the world after absolute nonexistence. . . . God alone existed without anything else, neither prime matter, nor a formless material,<sup>20</sup> nor angels, nor the celestial spheres.”<sup>21</sup> “Time itself belongs to the totality of generated things.”<sup>22</sup> “Although in its totality time is infinite, . . . that is only imaginary time, not real time.”<sup>23</sup>

In restating Maimonides’ view, it may be noted, Shalom makes two additions. Maimonides’ remark that God created the world by “His will and intention, from nothing” is analyzed by Shalom into two formal conditions for the proper belief in creation: (a) that an act of creation took place by God’s will; (b) that it took place *ex nihilo*. Then, to Maimonides’ list of things which must not be supposed to have existed before creation, Shalom adds “a formless material”; by this he wishes to intimate his rejection of Gersonides’ position.

Passing to this latter, Shalom explains that according to “the view of Gersonides . . . generation was, in a certain respect, something from nothing, and, in another respect, something from something. Creation took place from something since the world was created from a material.<sup>24</sup> But it took place from nothing since the world was created from a material devoid of all form.”<sup>25</sup>

In addition to these philosophic positions, Shalom also discusses the religious question of the dogmatic status of the belief in creation. It is possible to believe in creation *ex nihilo* without considering it to be a religious dogma, incumbent on all. Such in fact was the stand of Crescas and Albo; Crescas contended that the Aristotelian position is not heretical, while Albo contended the same concerning the position of Plato and Gersonides. When Shalom is led to examine this religious question, he defines and discusses Crescas’ view that “creation is not a basic dogma of the Torah,”<sup>26</sup> and Albo’s view that “the Torah and its miracles do not require a belief in creation *ex nihilo*.”<sup>27</sup>

*Replies to the arguments for eternity.*—Maimonides maintained that neither the creation

<sup>18</sup> M. N. II, 13, 30a: השם המציאו אחר ההעדר: הגמור, ושהשם ית' לבדו נמצא ולא דבר בלעדיו לא מלאך ולא גלגל ולא מה שבתוך הגלגל ואחר כן המציאו כל אלה הנמצאות כפי מה שהם ברצונו וחפצו לא מדבר, ושהזמן עצמו גם כן מכלל הנבראים . . . כל מה שיעלה בשכל מהמשך מציאותו קודם בריאת העולם המשך אין תכלית לו כל זה שער זמן . . . לא אמתת זמן. For an interpretation of this “supposition of time,” see Wolfson, *Spinoza*, I, 339.

<sup>19</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 22a: האמת כמו שאמר הרמב"ם והתנה בו ר"ל בחדוש האמתי שני תנאים הא' שהעולם השני שהמציאו בחפצו ורצונו יכללו המציאו השם יתברך אחר ההעדר המוחלט. השני שהמציאו בחפצו ורצונו.

<sup>20</sup> Literally: “a body which does not preserve its shape.” Elsewhere Gersonides and, following him, Shalom use the expression: *amorphous body* (cf. below, n. 25). But since by definition body must have form, Gersonides should be understood as using this expression in a loose sense. Cf. above, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> N. Sh. I, 14, 22a: השם יתברך המציאו אחר ההעדר המוחלט . . . שהש"י לבדו היה נמצא ולא דבר בלעדיו לא חמר ראשון ולא גשם בלתי שומר תמונתו ולא מלאך וגלגל. הזמן עצמו מכלל הנבראות: 8, 9b.

<sup>22</sup> N. Sh. I, 11, 17b: הוא דמות זמן לא אמתת זמן. . . . הוא דמות זמן לא אמתת זמן.

<sup>23</sup> Literally: body. See above, n. 20.

<sup>24</sup> N. Sh. I, 13, 19b, quoting M. H. VI, i, 17, 367: דעת הר"ל . . . ההוייה יש מאין מצד ויש מיש: המצד, ואמר שהיותה יש מיש הוא שתהיה מגשם והיותה יש מאין הוא שתהיה מגשם נעדר כל צורה.

<sup>25</sup> N. Sh. I, 13, 21a: ה"ר חסדאי חשב להוכיח שאין החדוש עקר לתורה: Cf. O. H. III, i, 5.

<sup>26</sup> N. Sh. I, 16, 25b: ה"ר יוסף אלוו שאמר שאין מהכרח התורה וניסיה להאמין בריאה יש מאין: Cf. *Sefer ha-Iqqarim* I, 12.



nor eternity of the world can be demonstrated apodictically, and therefore all that can be offered in support of the belief in creation is a series of *arguments*, not *demonstrations*.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, Shalom writes: "There is no demonstration for the creation of the world."<sup>29</sup> Having admitted that he could not really demonstrate the creation of the world, Maimonides tried to show that Aristotle on his part had also not intended to give a strict demonstration of eternity.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Shalom also writes that there is no "demonstration . . . for eternity."<sup>31</sup> In another context he also cites Maimonides' interpretation of a passage in Aristotle by which Maimonides had tried to prove this point.<sup>32</sup> In explaining the aspect in Maimonides' arguments which renders them just "arguments" and not "demonstrations," Shalom employs the distinction between (a) the act of creation and (b) its occurrence *ex nihilo*.<sup>33</sup> He explains that a sufficient demonstration had indeed been provided for the first of these, although not for the second: "By his arguments Maimonides did not think that he was proving absolute creation, that is creation from nothingness. . . . He only wished to disprove the view of those who believe that this entire world exists by necessity; for when the condition of the universe is examined, the opposite appears, and the universe provides a proof of its existing by the intention and will of an agent."<sup>34</sup> It will appear that according to Maimonides and Shalom the assumption that the world exists by the will of God implies creation. Thus Shalom is saying in effect that only creation *ex nihilo* is undemonstrable, but that Maimonides did in fact succeed in demonstrating that some act of creation took place.

Before presenting his own arguments for creation, Maimonides examined various attempts to prove the eternity of the world by showing, from physical nature and from the nature of God, that the creation of the world is an impossibility. He discussed four physical arguments, two of them being intended to disprove creation *ex nihilo*, and the other two being intended to disprove any theory of creation.<sup>35</sup> These arguments were reexamined minutely by Gersonides,<sup>36</sup> and then again by Crescas, who classified them as follows: "from time, motion, the celestial body, and prime matter."<sup>37</sup> Gersonides also suggested, and Crescas stated, another possible objection to the assumption of creation *ex nihilo*: that assumption would seem to carry the presumably unacceptable implication that there existed a vacuum before the universe occupied its present place.<sup>38</sup> When Shalom refers to these physical arguments for the eternity of the world he gives an adaption of Crescas' list. His new list includes the arguments from the implication of a

<sup>28</sup> M. N. I, 71, 109a; II, 16, 35a.

<sup>29</sup> N. Sh. IV, 1, 52b: העולם חדוש העולם.

<sup>30</sup> M. N. II, 15.

<sup>31</sup> N. Sh. IV, 1, 52b: על קדמותו . . . אין מופת.

<sup>32</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 114b: וזה לשונו השמים ועולם וזה לשונו . . . נרצה עתה לחקור . . . Cf. M. N. II, 15, 34a.

<sup>33</sup> See above, p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> N. Sh. I, 8, 8a-b: רצוני היותו . . . גם הרב לא היה בדעתו להוכיח מאותם הטענות החדוש במחלט, רצוני היותו . . . מהאפס הגמור . . . רק רצה להוכיח לבטל דעת המאמין שזה המציאות כלו על צד החיוב שכשיבחן עניינו יראה ההפך רצוני שמהמציאות תלקח ראיה על היותו בכונת מכיין ורצון רוצה . . . This interpretation by Shalom rests on the fact that Maimonides offered arguments for creation, but not for the occurrence of creation *ex nihilo*. It is more probable that Maimonides says that he is offering just "arguments" because his method consists in revealing the weakness of the opponent's view (cf. M. N. II, 16, 35a), while he had explained that that method cannot produce a demonstration (cf. M. N. II, 15, 34a).

<sup>35</sup> M. N. II, 14.

<sup>36</sup> M. H. VI, i, 3, 298-302.

<sup>37</sup> O. H. III, i, 1.

<sup>38</sup> M. H. VI, i, 3, 301; O. H. III, i, 1, 62b.



preëxistent vacuum, and then, to preserve the number four, it combines the arguments from prime matter and the celestial body into a single argument from "matter." "Those who believe in eternity," Shalom writes, "adduce arguments either from motion, time, matter, or the vacuum."<sup>39</sup> It happens that Maimonides had explained that only these physical considerations in favor of eternity are strictly Aristotelian in origin, while others were formulated by later philosophers.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, Shalom remarks that these are the "strongest arguments, . . . the others being empty, as Maimonides wrote."<sup>41</sup>

Shalom does not provide an exposition of these arguments from physical nature but does allude to at least one of them. The underlying motif in all four arguments is that the very concept of creation *ex nihilo*, or simply of creation, is untenable, since something must already have existed before any supposed creation could have taken place.<sup>42</sup> Considering prime matter, for example, it was contended that since everything which comes into existence is observed to be generated from something else, prime matter also could only have been generated from an already existent substratum; but that could only be another, prior matter, so that matter would already have existed before its supposed generation.<sup>43</sup> Shalom refers to this train of reasoning as "the difficulty . . . from the impossibility [of the generation] of something from nothing."<sup>44</sup>

To all physical arguments of this type Maimonides made one reply: They all consider the conditions which obtain in the present stable world, while these conditions would not have obtained before and during the process of creation. Shalom, quoting Maimonides, explains that even in those cases of generation in the present world when the "matter already existed so that it merely divested itself of one form and invested itself with another, the nature of the thing after having been generated is different from its nature during the process of generation . . . and also different from its nature before it began to pass to actuality."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, no analogy should be drawn from the present condition of a thing to its state before and during the process of its generation; and Shalom concludes, Aristotle erred when "he did adduce arguments [for eternity] from the nature of the stable, perfected, actually existent universe."<sup>46</sup> Having quoted Maimonides' general reply to all physical arguments for eternity, Shalom also quotes his characterization of this solution as "a great bulwark, surrounding the Torah and protecting it . . ."<sup>47</sup> Then, applying the solution to the train of reasoning which attempts to show that prime matter could not have come into existence, Shalom distinguishes between the present state of the universe when only "partial generation" can occur, and an earlier state when there occurred a "universal generation," that is, the generation of matter itself: "In this way we may solve the difficulty . . . from the impossibility [of the generation] of something from nothing. For granted that in cases of partial generation we never observe that corporeality

<sup>39</sup> N. Sh. I, 13, 20b: שהם מביאים ראיה אם מצד התנועה אם מצד הזמן אם מצד החמר אם מצד הרקות.

<sup>40</sup> M. N. II, 14, 33a.

<sup>41</sup> N. Sh. I, 13, 20b: ואלו הם הטענות היותר חזקות אתם ושאר הראיות בטלות כמש"ה.

<sup>42</sup> The second and fourth "ways" discussed by Maimonides are intended to show that there always existed a matter. The first and third are intended to show that the heavens always had their present form.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* I, 9, 192a, 29-31; M. N. II, 14(b); M. H. VI, i, 3, 300; O. H. III, i, 1, 62b.

<sup>44</sup> See below, n. 48.

<sup>45</sup> N. Sh. I, 13, 20a, quoting M. N. II, 17, 35a-b: כל מתחדש היה אחר שלא היה ואפילו היה: החמר שלו נמצא ואמנם הפשיט צורתו ולבש צורה אחרת יהיה טבעו אחר התחדשו . . . בלתי טבעו בעת ההוותו . . . וזולת טבעו גם כן קודם שיתנועע ליציאה לפועל.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: ארסטו יבא לסתר דבריו בלקחו ראיות מטבע המציאות הנח השלם ההווה בפועל.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, quoting M. N. II, 17, 36b: חומה גדולה סביב התורה מקפת בה מונעת אבן כל משליך אליה.



[itself] is generated, this does not involve the impossibility of corporeality being generated in a case of universal generation.<sup>1748</sup>

After examining the physical arguments for creation, Maimonides took up the attempts to prove the eternity of the world from the nature of God. It had been contended, he explained, that if God be supposed to have acted in creating the world, His beginning to act would have been a transition from potentiality to actuality, while God, being incorporeal, is always actual and cannot undergo such a transition.<sup>49</sup> Maimonides replied that this reasoning is invalid since the categories of actuality and potentiality are completely inapplicable to God.<sup>50</sup> This reply is paraphrased by Shalom as follows: "Whenever God acts, He may not be said to pass from potentiality to actuality; for God does not contain any possibility."<sup>51</sup>

It had also been contended, Maimonides explained, that there are no motive or obstructive factors which might cause God to act at one time and not at another; therefore, He cannot be assumed to have acted in creating the world after not having so acted.<sup>82</sup> Maimonides' reply to this contention was that the action of God does not depend on external factors, but only on His own will. Shalom again quotes the solution: "When an act has no purpose whatsoever except the pursuance of the agent's will, then that will does not require any motive factors to induce it to act. . . . Such a voluntary agent need not act from eternity since there is no external purpose for the sake of which he acts."<sup>83</sup> Maimonides was led by this last consideration to solve a further difficulty: Assuming that God's action depends solely on His own will, it would seem that His beginning to act after not having acted implies a change in will. As part of his solution of this final difficulty, Maimonides cited a principle which was frequently used by him, the absolute difference between the attributes of God and man. He wrote: "The will of a corporeal being is a changing will since it has an external purpose. . . . But the will of an incorporeal being does not change, since it does not act for the sake of anything else. . . . The term *will* is applied to our will and to the will of an incorporeal being equivocally."<sup>84</sup> Shalom gives a paraphrase of this explanation, writing: "While our will changes when we act at one time and not at another, the will of an incorporeal being does not change for there is no relation between the two wills."<sup>85</sup>

*Philosophic arguments for creation.*—Having answered these arguments for eternity to his own satisfaction, Maimonides presented his own arguments for creation. His reasoning, adapted from Algalali,<sup>56</sup> involved the distinction between the uniformity, necessity, and

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*: "ההחלטה הייתה ברורה מאד לא שגם י"א לא היו זכאים להתחברות... • • • לפיכך יורשין ארבעה וזה מובחשם זהו הדין".

[illegible]



eternity of the universe, on the one hand, and its having been designed by a voluntary agent and created, on the other. One version of the reasoning is as follows: If the universe exists eternally and by necessity, its structure should be explicable in accordance with the principle that from "a simple being only one simple being may necessarily proceed."<sup>57</sup> But, according to this principle, all that can be emanated from God and from each incorporeal intelligence is another incorporeal intelligence. Consequently, on the assumption of eternity no explanation can be given for the complexity and corporeality of the universe.<sup>58</sup> However, if the assumption of eternity is rejected, the complexity and corporeality of the world can be explained as due to the design of God, now conceived as a free agent. This train of reasoning is quoted by Shalom from Maimonides: "How could a sphere emanate from this one simple [intelligence] seeing that the sphere is composed of two kinds of matter and two forms, the matter and form of the sphere, and the matter and form of its star? If all this occurred by necessity, as Aristotle claims, we should have to assume a composite cause. . . . But if we assume that it occurs through the design of an agent who produced and determined it as His wisdom decreed, . . . we are free of all of the difficulties."<sup>59</sup>

Another version of what is essentially the same reasoning ran as follows: On the assumption of the eternity and necessity of the order of the universe, the movement of the celestial spheres should be uniform; but, in fact, no theory was forthcoming to reduce them to a uniform scheme; again, therefore, these irregularities may be explained only if one assumes that they are due to the design of a free agent. Shalom also quotes this argument from Maimonides: "Aristotle does not give any evident reason for what he says concerning the spheres. They do not follow any order which would justify the supposition of necessity, for we see some rapidly moving spheres above slow moving spheres, and some slow moving spheres above rapidly moving spheres. . . . There are many other enormous difficulties on the assumption that these phenomena occur by necessity."<sup>60</sup> But, Shalom concludes: "For us the cause of this variation is easy to explain. We say that there is a determining agent who determined the direction and speed of each moving sphere according to His will."<sup>61</sup>

Since Maimonides knew that even philosophers who believed in eternity spoke of the "will" of God,<sup>62</sup> he anticipated the possibility that phenomena in the universe might be explained as having been designed by God's "eternal will." Against this possible position, Maimonides contended that no action which has occurred from eternity may be described as voluntary; therefore, anyone who speaks of an "eternal will" has merely "changed the term *necessity* while leaving the idea."<sup>63</sup> It happened that Crescas actually proposed the theory which Maimonides had answered in anticipation. Accordingly, when discussing

<sup>57</sup> Cf. above, p. 47.

<sup>58</sup> M. N. II, 22, 47b-48a. This is a rejection of Avicenna's reasoning, described above, p. 47.

<sup>59</sup> N. Sh. I, 8, ga, quoting M. N. II, 22, 48a-b: *אין יהיה ממנו הגלגל איך יהיה חמר הגלגל וצורתו חמר הכוכב הקבוע בגלגל וצורתו. ואם יהיה הענין כפי החיוב כמו שאמר ארסטו אי איפשר לנו בהכרח לזה המורכב מבלתי סבה מורכבת . . . אבל כשאמר שזה כלו בכונת מכויין פעלו ויחדו כמו שגזרה חכמתו . . . לא יתחייב לנו דבר מאלה השאלות כלם כל מה שזכרו בענייני הגלגל לא נתן בזה עלה מבוראת ולא*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 8b, quoting M. N. II, 19, 41a-b: *שהנה נראה גלגלים מהם שהממהר התנועה למעלה מן המתאחר הענין בו על סדר שיתכן לומר בו החיוב שהנה נראה גלגלים מהם שהממהר התנועה למעלה מהמתאחר התנועה ומהם מה שהמתאחר התנועה למעלה מהממהר התנועה . . . ועניינים אחרים מאד עצומים בחוק בחינת היות הענין על צד החיוב*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 9a: *ההתחלפות הזה ונאמר שיש מיחד יחד כל גלגל במה שרצה מצד התנועה ומהירותה*

<sup>62</sup> Cf. above, p. 32, n. 56.

<sup>63</sup> M. N. II, 21, 46b: *אלו שנו מלת החיוב והשאיירו עניינו*



Crescas, Shalom writes: "Those who profess a belief in an eternal will have merely changed the term *necessity*, while leaving the idea."<sup>64</sup>

The argument which has been outlined is based on translunar phenomena, contending that these reveal design, and concluding therefrom that the universe must have been created. Shalom understands that the same reasoning is involved in a later passage in Maimonides' *Guide* which refers to sublunar phenomena. This passage is quoted by Shalom, as follows: "Know well that for those who assent to the truth, one of the strongest proofs for the creation of the world is what has been demonstrated concerning physical beings. It has been demonstrated that each of them has a purpose outside of itself and that one exists for the sake of another. This is a proof for the design of a designing agent, and design is inconceivable without something coming into existence."<sup>65</sup> Shalom interprets the passage, in what would seem to be its obvious sense, as an argument for creation from the presence of purpose in the lower world:<sup>66</sup> "Purpose is only to be sought in the case of created things which are produced by the design of an intelligent being. However, for things which are not created, no purpose is to be sought."<sup>67</sup> In other words, as Shalom understands him, Maimonides is arguing for creation from the presence of purpose in the lower world. This would constitute what might be called a teleological proof of creation.

Shalom also cites a similar argument from Gersonides. Gersonides had defined what he maintained are the three exclusive properties of anything which has come into existence, the first and "most peculiar" of the three being that such a thing exists for a purpose.<sup>68</sup> When discussing Crescas' criticism of Gersonides, Shalom, therefore, also refers to the "three properties which belong to a generated being," adding that the first "is the fact that the generated thing is made for some purpose."<sup>69</sup> After Gersonides had established these properties of generated beings, he proceeded to reason that since they are to be found in various fundamental phenomena in the universe, the universe must have come into existence. One phenomenon in which he found the properties in question is the failure of the oceans to extend over all of the earth although that would be their natural place; this, for example, serves the purpose of making possible the existence of the higher animals.<sup>70</sup> Hence, Shalom, again in discussing Crescas' criticism, refers to the "proofs which Gersonides formulated from the fact that the earth is not covered with water."<sup>71</sup>

*Religious arguments in favor of creation ex nihilo.*—Maimonides, having conceded that his arguments fell short of completely demonstrating the creation of the world, explained that ultimately it is for religious reasons that the belief in creation is incumbent upon all Jews. On the assumption of creation, he wrote, all aspects of Biblical religion may be

<sup>64</sup> N. Sh. I, 8, 9b: שהאומרים ברצון (קדום) [קדום] שנו מלת החיוב והשאירו ענינו.

<sup>65</sup> N. Sh. I, 9, 9b, quoting M. N. III, 13, 17b: ודע שמהגדולה שבראיות על חדוש העולם למי שמודה [על] האמת הוא מה שיעמוד עליו המופת במצאות הטבעיות כי לכל דבר מהם תכלית אחד ושזה מופת יזה וזה ראיה על כונת מכין ולא יצויר כונה רק עם התחדשות מחדש.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Wolfson, "Hallevi and Maimonides on Design . . .," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XI, 154, for another interpretation of this passage.

<sup>67</sup> N. Sh. I, 9, 9b: שהתכלית אמנם יבוקש לכל מחדש שנעשה בכונת בעל שכל אמנם הדבר שאינו מחדש לא יבוקש לו תכלית.

<sup>68</sup> M. H. VI, i, 6.

<sup>69</sup> N. Sh. I, 9, 9b: מה שההווה נעשה לתכלית מה . . . אם הא' והיא שההווה נעשה לתכלית מה.

<sup>70</sup> M. H. VI, i, 13. For parallels, cf. M. Joel, *Lewi ben Gerson als Religionsphilosoph* (Breslau, 1862), p. 77, n. 1.

<sup>71</sup> N. Sh. I, 11, 18a: המופתים שסדר בהגלות הארץ.







creation took place *ex nihilo*,<sup>83</sup> accordingly, scriptural religion is "not perfectly" conceivable except on this assumption.<sup>84</sup>

Two difficulties in designating creation *ex nihilo* as religious dogma are acknowledged by Shalom. The first is that Maimonides did not include creation, even without the stipulation that it occurred *ex nihilo*, in the list of thirteen dogmas which he drew up.<sup>85</sup> In solving this difficulty Shalom points out that, in the *Guide*, Maimonides does call the belief in creation a "fundamental" (*yesod*, *qā'idah*).<sup>86</sup> Playing on this term, he explains that creation is even more basic than the other beliefs: "I think that this is the reason that Maimonides did not enumerate it among his dogmas. It is a fundamental underlying them all and there is a great difference between a fundamental (*yesod*) and a dogma (*'iqqar*)."<sup>87</sup>

A second difficulty is that both Maimonides and Hallevi conceded that the belief in creation from a preëxistent matter is compatible with the Jewish religion.<sup>88</sup> Shalom explains: "Judah Hallevi was merely enumerating all of the conceivable possibilities. . . . He did not mean that creation really took place in that way."<sup>89</sup> Of Maimonides, Shalom writes: "Maimonides himself says that this is not the view of the Torah, . . . and although the truth of the Torah is conceivable on this belief in creation, as he wrote, it is not perfectly so."<sup>90</sup>

*The future existence of the world.*—Both Maimonides and Gersonides, having maintained that the world was created, believed that in the future it is possible for it to exist eternally. This belief would contradict the Aristotelian principle that everything which is generated must be destroyed,<sup>91</sup> and both Maimonides and Gersonides attempted to remove the contradiction, each in his own way. Maimonides explained that since the world was *created*, not *generated* by a natural process, it does not enter the class of "generated and destructible" bodies and therefore is not subject to Aristotle's rule.<sup>92</sup> Gersonides, however, justified his position by contending that the Aristotelian principle itself is invalid.<sup>93</sup>

Shalom takes an intermediate stand, which leads him to the view that the Aristotelian rule is indeed valid, but only as long as we consider the natural aspect of things, while for those who believe in the miracle of creation there is another aspect of things according to which "it is possible for a generated body to acquire eternal existence."<sup>94</sup> As for the actual case of the universe, Shalom explains that since it is a "created substance which contains

<sup>83</sup> N. Sh. I, 16, 26a: [יש מאין] יש העולם חדוש.

<sup>84</sup> See above, n. 79. As another consideration, Shalom writes that resurrection is "inconceivable from a theoretical point of view except on the belief in creation *ex nihilo*" (N. Sh. I, 15, 22b): לא יצוייר בנפש מצד העיון רק עם אמונת חדוש העולם יש מאין.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Maimonides' commentary on Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* X (XI), 1.

<sup>86</sup> M. N. II, 27, 53a.

<sup>87</sup> N. Sh. I, 3, 3b: ויש . . . בכלל העקרims שהוא היסוד להם ויש . . . וזאת היא הסבה אצלי שלא מנאו הרמב"ם בכלל העקרims. Actually, Maimonides terms his thirteen dogmas both *yesodot* (*qawā'id*) and *'iqqarim* (*uṣūl*). Cf. his commentary on Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* X (XI), 1; Arabic edited by J. Holzer (Berlin, 1901), p. 20, lines 24-25.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Hallevi, *Cuzari* I, 67; M. N. II, 25.

<sup>89</sup> N. Sh. I, 16, 26b: הנה ה'יר יהודה הלוי ע"ה רבותא קא משמע לן . . . לא שהאמת יהיה כך.

<sup>90</sup> N. Sh. I, 15, 22b: ועתה שיצוייר מציאות התורה . . . ועם שיצוייר מציאות התורה . . . אמנם לא בשלמות בהאמין החדוש על אופן זה דעת התורה.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo* I, 10, 279b, 20-21.

<sup>92</sup> M. N. II, 17, 36a; 27, 53a.

<sup>93</sup> M. H. VI, 1, 27, 414.

<sup>94</sup> N. Sh. VII, 1, 4, 102a: ההוא הנצחיות לקנות אפשר כבר בדורש העולם כבר אפשר לקנות ההוא הנצחיות.



nothing that might bring destruction to its nature," it "may become eternal."<sup>95</sup> However, this does not necessarily mean that the universe will, in fact, exist for eternity. Following Maimonides, Shalom writes that the future of the universe depends on the pleasure of God, for destruction may overtake it "if God so will."<sup>96</sup>

*Summary.*—While the professed object of Shalom's discussion is the arbitration between the positions of Maimonides and Gersonides, in fact, his discussion becomes simply a rebuttal of criticisms raised by Gersonides and Crescas. Considering the object and form of his discussion, not surprisingly it is Maimonides who serves as the source from which almost all of Shalom's material is drawn. The result is a complete, though unsystematic, restatement of the important points in Maimonides' treatment.

Thus in addition to analyzing the views of Maimonides and Gersonides, Shalom quotes Maimonides' definition of the positions of Plato and Aristotle, and he also mentions, though inaccurately, the position of Epicurus. He repeats Maimonides' reply to the arguments for eternity: the physical arguments are deemed invalid since the laws of nature now in force would not have operated before and during the creation of the world; the arguments for eternity from the nature of God are deemed invalid since the categories of potentiality, actuality, and change of will are completely inapplicable to God. Having disposed of the arguments for eternity, Shalom cites Maimonides' arguments in favor of creation. These are, first, the evidence of design in the translunar world, and, second, the evidence of purpose in the sublunar world.<sup>97</sup> Both design and purpose, he contends, are inexplicable except when understood as produced in an act of free will, while such an act, in turn, is incompatible with eternity and therefore implies creation. In addition to this philosophic argument, Shalom follows Maimonides in adducing the religious consideration that the belief in scriptural religion depends on the assumption that God is a free agent capable of an act of creation.

Shalom's analysis of one phrase should be especially noted since it indicates the care with which he read his source, and because it provides him with a neat instrument for interpreting several of Maimonides' general remarks. The correct religious view, according to Maimonides, is that God created the universe "by his will and intention, from nothing." In these words Shalom finds two distinct elements for the correct belief: (a) an act of creation by the will of God, and (b) the assumption that it occurred *ex nihilo*. It is in terms of these two elements that Shalom interprets Maimonides' statement that neither creation nor eternity is subject to a strict demonstration; he explains that the first of the two elements was indeed demonstrated, while the second, the assumption that creation occurred from nothing, is undemonstrable. Again using this analysis of two elements in the correct belief, Shalom interprets the statement that religious considerations are satisfied even on the assumption that creation took place from a preëxistent matter. He explains that the denial of the first element, the act of creation itself, renders scriptural religion completely "inconceivable"; on the denial of the second element, the occurrence of creation *ex nihilo*, scriptural religion does remain "conceivable"; and yet it is "perfectly" so only when both elements in the belief are assumed. This would approximate Maimonides' own view.

<sup>95</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 3, 101a: נצחם נברא שאין בו דבר יחייב לטבעו ההפסד כבר אפשר לו שישבו נצחי.

<sup>96</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 7, 119b: ירצה השם: אם ישיגם ההפסד כבר ירצה השם. Cf. M. N. II, 17, 36a. For this view in Philo of Alexandria, see Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 316.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. above, nn. 59-61, 65, and 67.



## CHAPTER VI

### DIVINE KNOWLEDGE AND DIVINE PROVIDENCE

THE PROBLEMS of divine knowledge and providence, Maimonides had written, are "tied to one another,"<sup>1</sup> the reason for this being that the exercise of providence might be supposed to extend just as far as knowledge does.<sup>2</sup> Shalom expresses the connection between the problems of divine providence and knowledge when he describes those who are "skeptical about divine providence" as doubting "whether God has knowledge of particular things";<sup>3</sup> and again when he writes that unless God be assumed to have knowledge of individuals and their actions, He cannot "punish the sinner or requite the pious."<sup>4</sup> Both of these problems are discussed at some length in *Neweh Shalom*.<sup>5</sup>

#### DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

In Shalom's statements on divine knowledge, the following three topics may be distinguished: the reproduction of the positions of Maimonides and Gersonides, and the refutation of the latter; the difference between divine knowledge and human knowledge; the harmonization of divine foreknowledge with human free will.

In a way that recalls his dismissal of the views on creation of the "earlier writers,"<sup>6</sup> Shalom here dismisses the views of the "philosopher" on divine knowledge. For, he explains, the "philosopher" was not subject to the belief in Scripture;<sup>7</sup> that is to say, Aristotle did not take religious factors into consideration when formulating his position. Shalom's "open rebuke"<sup>8</sup> is instead directed against "those of our sages who believe in the Torah, yet made incorrect statements on this topic,"<sup>9</sup> in other words, against Gersonides. His procedure is to examine the views of Maimonides and Gersonides and then to establish the former by refuting the latter.

Maimonides had professed the belief that God has knowledge of every individual being in the universe. He stated this as follows: "Whoever seeks and assents to the

<sup>1</sup> M. N. III, 16, 23a: שהדברים בידעה ובהשגחה נקשרים קצתם בקצתם.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 22a-23a.

<sup>3</sup> N. Sh. II, 10, 41b: יהיו מסופקים בהשגחה אם השם יתברך יודע הפרטים.

<sup>4</sup> N. Sh. III, 4, 47b: לא יענש החוטא ולא יגמל העובד והיה כצדיק כרשע ותבטל התורה.

<sup>5</sup> N. Sh. III, 1; XII, ii; and other scattered passages. Shalom's statements on providence (N. Sh. IV, *et passim*) all appear in homiletic contexts.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 43a: לא נחוש עתה להביא דעות הפילוסוף ולהתווכח עמו מפני שלא לחצתהו אמונה. Shalom probably understood Aristotle's position as being that God knows the general order of the world.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Prov. 27: 5.

<sup>9</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 43a: אולם תוכחתנו המגולה תהיה עם חכמינו אנשי התורה שדברו בדרוש הזה דבר בלתי צודק.



truth<sup>10</sup> should believe that nothing is hidden from God in any way, but that everything is manifest to His knowledge."<sup>11</sup> Repeating Maimonides' statement, Shalom writes: "Whoever assents to the truth must believe that nothing is hidden from God in any way, but that everything is manifest to His knowledge."<sup>12</sup>

Gersonides' position was that God has knowledge of the general order of the universe, embracing the translunar world, the types of individual things and events in the sublunar world, the fact that these things and events are contingent, but not extending to the things and events themselves.<sup>13</sup> Underlying this view is the theory, which Shalom also has been seen to repeat, that events in the sublunar world are directed by the celestial spheres and intelligences;<sup>14</sup> Gersonides explained that in the first place, God has knowledge of the celestial world, and, then, through it, He also knows that aspect of the lower world which the celestial world determines. Quoting Gersonides' statement of his own position, Shalom notes that Gersonides had presented a series of arguments to "prove that God knows particular things in the lower world," and another set of "philosophic" arguments to "prove that God cannot know particular things." These two sets of arguments led Gersonides to the conclusion that "God knows particular things in one respect but does not know them in another. . . . The respect in which God knows them is that in which they are ordered and defined. . . . The respect in which He does not know them is that in which they are not ordered but contingent."<sup>15</sup> As an example of divine knowledge of the sublunar world according to this theory, Shalom mentions the knowledge "that any individual born under a given aspect of the planets is destined to enjoy certain good or evil fortune, [the actual occurrence of] this good and evil fortune remaining contingent and subject to human choice."<sup>16</sup>

As was to be expected, it is the position of Maimonides which Shalom adopts. This, he explains, "is the view of our Torah."<sup>17</sup> To refute Gersonides, Shalom raises a series of both philosophic and religious objections,<sup>18</sup> three of which seem to be most significant.

One objection made by Shalom is that according to Gersonides' theory the deity would suffer ignorance. Maimonides had maintained that since ignorance is a defect, it cannot be present in God. Consequently, according to Maimonides, although there may be difficulties in assuming divine knowledge of a part or the whole of the universe, those who denied it "have fallen into a worse predicament than the one they fled."<sup>19</sup> This same objection, in almost the same words, was raised by Crescas against Gersonides' position. He wrote that in denying divine knowledge of individual things and events, Gersonides

<sup>10</sup> The Arabic is *al-muḥaqqiq al-munṣif*, which Munk, *Guide*, III, 158, renders: *celui qui cherche sincèrement la vérité*; but I have translated Ibn Tibbon's version as Shalom must have understood it.

<sup>11</sup> M. N. III, 21, 31b: דבר ית' לא יעלם ממנו דבר . . . אלא שכל אדם חייב לדעתו . . .

<sup>12</sup> N. Sh. III, 6, 50a: הכל אצל אדם ידוע . . . דבר כלל אצל הכל . . .

<sup>13</sup> M. H. III, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. above, pp. 45 and 51.

<sup>15</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 43a-b, quoting M. H. III, 4, 138: וכאשר התישב זה, רצוני שאלו הטענות יקיימו . . . והטענות הקודמות לפילוסופים יבטלו ידיעתו אותם הנה לא יסור . . . אלא שידעם בצד ולא ידעם בצד . . . הצד שידעם הוא הצד שהם מסודרים ומוגבלים . . . והצד שלא ידעם . . . הוא הצד שהם בו בלתי מסודרים, והוא הצד שהם בו אפשריים . . .

<sup>16</sup> N. Sh. III, 3, 45a: טובות כך או רעות ונשאר . . . על דרך משל שכל איש הנוול במבט כך יחוייבו לו טובות . . . אותם הטובות והרעות איפשריים מצד הבחירה האנושית . . .

<sup>17</sup> N. Sh. III, 4, 47b: ודעת הר"ם הוא דעת תורתנו . . .

<sup>18</sup> N. Sh. III, 3.

<sup>19</sup> M. N. III, 16, 22b: נפלו ביותר רע ממה שברחו ממנו . . .



was "fleeing" one difficulty, but as a result attributed the "imperfection of ignorance" to God, and thus "fell into greater difficulties."<sup>20</sup>

Shalom, in his curious way, rejects this criticism of Gersonides when it is raised by Crescas, but then employs it himself. Against Crescas' criticism, Shalom quotes Gersonides' own explanation. According to this, although God knows individual things only in their generality, He may not be said to suffer ignorance, since He possesses the maximum amount of knowledge that is conceivable.<sup>21</sup> In other passages, however, Shalom himself contends that Gersonides' theory attributes both imperfection and ignorance to God. He writes that if divine knowledge is assumed to be general it must be "uncertain" and therefore "imperfect," since an act of human choice may abrogate what is determined by the general order.<sup>22</sup> Again, he writes that since the final cause is "the finest of the [four] causes" it follows that "there is no imperfection greater than ignorance of the final cause in things"; however, on the assumption that God does not have knowledge of individual things, He would "be ignorant of the final cause in [the lives of] individual men" and "there would be no ignorance greater than that."<sup>23</sup>

A second objection raised by Shalom is that Gersonides contradicted himself in maintaining that God has knowledge both of the general order of things and also of the fact that they are individual and contingent. He argues that since, according to the theory, the general order of things is determined, while their contingency is undetermined, these are two contrary facts and cannot be comprehended by divine knowledge, which is understood by all to be perfectly simple: "To assert that God knows all things both in the aspect in which they are ordered, and also in the aspect in which they are contingent upon free choice, is a contradiction. For in the determinate order there is no place for the decision of free choice."<sup>24</sup> Shalom repeats this contention several times in slightly different ways.<sup>25</sup> Then, as a further explanation, he adds that there would be no difficulty in assuming "that a thing is determined from the point of view of the general order, but contingent from the point of view of [human] choice"; the difficulty follows only from the assumption that God, by "one act of knowledge, which contains no more than one aspect," can know these two things.<sup>26</sup>

A third objection raised by Shalom is that Gersonides' view is opposed to Scripture. Crescas had written: "According to . . . our Torah . . . God knows particular things. This is clear from the scriptural stories, the cases in which particular people were commanded, and the promise [of reward and punishment for particular deeds]."<sup>27</sup> In the same vein, Shalom writes: "The view of the true Torah, as is shown in many verses, is that God

<sup>20</sup> O. H. II, i, 3, 31a: שהם ברחו מליחס לו יתברך רבוי ידיעות ויחסו לו חסרון הסכלות שהוא גדול שבחסרונות.

<sup>21</sup> N. Sh. III, 6, 49a, citing M. H. III, 4, 139. The point is similar to that made in Maimonides' restatement of the Platonic position on creation; cf. above p. 56.

<sup>22</sup> N. Sh. III, 3, 45a: מסופקת אלא מוטעית ודאית אלא מסופקת. ידיעתו ית' חסרה . . . לפי שאין ידיעתו באותו הכלל ידיעה ודאית אלא מסופקת.

<sup>23</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 2, 200a: להיותו הסבה הנכבדת בכל הענינים. On the final cause as the finest of the four causes, cf. O. H. II, vi, 1, 51a.

<sup>24</sup> N. Sh. III, 3, 44b: שאמרנו שהוא יתברך יודע הדברים כלם מצד מה שהם מסודרים ואמרנו שידע עם יזה מה שיש בהם מהאפשרות מצד הבחירה שני מקבילים, לפי שאין בסדור המוגבל מקום להוראת הבחירה.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 44b-45b.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 45a: אבל אמנם ימשך מהנחת הדבר מחוייב מצד הסדור ואפשרי מצד הבחירה, אחד אמנם ימשך מהנחתו בו ידיעה אחת מצד אחד.

<sup>27</sup> O. H. II, i, 1, 28a: היותו יתברך משיג הפרטים וזה אם בספורים שבאר בה ידיעה אחת מצד אחד.



knows particular things in their particular aspect.”<sup>28</sup> Again: “[If] God knows the particular only through the intellectual order in His mind, . . . He is ignorant of all things in this world since they are particular. How, then, could God have commanded the people through the prophets, seeing that they are particular men and, according to the theory, unknown to Him except through the general order? . . . Further, how can God reward a particular righteous man? . . . It is forbidden to listen to these words, let alone believe them.”<sup>29</sup>

In one passage Gersonides remarked that it was Scripture which had “compelled” (*laḥṣah*) Maimonides to take his position on divine knowledge.<sup>30</sup> With this phrase in mind, Crescas had explained Gersonides’ position on this question as the product of two opposing forces, Scripture “compelling him to accept divine knowledge of the particular” while he “supposed that speculation compelled him to deny it.”<sup>31</sup> Shalom pointedly applies the phrase, with its suggestion of tendentiousness, to Gersonides, but not to Maimonides. He writes that “speculation compelled Gersonides to write what he did, while the divine Torah and its speculation brought Maimonides to write what he wrote.”<sup>32</sup>

In the course of his discussion of divine knowledge, Maimonides dealt with a series of five difficulties in the assumption that God knows individual things and events. These are the following: (1) Since God’s knowledge is unchanging, if He knew particular things He would have to know them in the same way at all times, including the periods both before and after they exist; but there can be no knowledge of the nonexistent. (2) Particular things are infinite, and there can be no knowledge of the infinite. (3) Particular things change and therefore the knowledge of them changes; but God and His knowledge are unchanging. (4) Knowledge which has several things as its object would be plural; but God and His knowledge cannot contain any plurality. (5) Divine foreknowledge would imply that future events are determined, while religion assumes that future events are contingent and subject to human free will.<sup>33</sup>

In reply to all of these difficulties Maimonides adduced the principle of the dissimilarity of God and man. He contended that the difficulties in question do not follow from a consideration of the nature of knowledge itself, but only from analogy with human knowledge; therefore, while a single act of human knowledge cannot have a plurality of changing things as its object, this may be possible for divine knowledge which is completely dissimilar.<sup>34</sup> As one explanation of the dissimilarity of divine knowledge,<sup>35</sup> Maimonides cited the distinction between knowledge, such as that of an artisan, which

<sup>28</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 43b: שדעת התורה האמתית לפי מה שנראה במקומות רבים ממנה שהש״י יודע הפרטים מצד שהם פרטים.

<sup>29</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 2, 199b-200a: אחר שלא ידע הפרטי אלא מצד הסדור המושכל שבנפשו . . . אם כן יסכל כל הדברים שבכאן להיותם פרטיים ואיך יצוה על ידי נביאיו והם אישים פרטיים בלתי נודעים אליו רק ימצד הסדור הכולל . . . ואיך יגמול לזה הצדיק . . . אלה הדברים אסור לשמעם אף כי להאמין בהם The final phrase is used by Isaac ben Sheshet (Ribash), *Responsa* (Constantinople, 1546-1547), no. 45.

<sup>30</sup> M. H. III, 3, 132.

<sup>31</sup> O. H. II, i, 2, 29b: . . . ידעתו יתברך הפרטית . . . וכשלחצם העיון לפי מה שדמו לחייב המנעות הענינים . . .

<sup>32</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 2, 200a: הביא להרמב״ם לומר מה שאמר והתורה האלהית ועיונה . . .

<sup>33</sup> M. N. III, 20, 29b-30a.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Also cf. above, pp. 34, 37.



precedes an object and is its cause, and knowledge which is derived from an object; divine knowledge, he explained, belongs to the former type while human knowledge belongs to the latter.<sup>36</sup>

Shalom uses both Maimonides' solution of the difficulties in assuming divine knowledge of the particular, and also the distinction between causal and derivative knowledge. Quoting from Maimonides, he writes that what led people to doubt whether God has knowledge of particular things was "the assumption of a relation between divine knowledge and human knowledge," while in fact "these have nothing in common, just as the essence of both God and man have nothing in common."<sup>37</sup> Then, to provide a further explanation, he draws the distinction between divine knowledge, which resembles the knowledge of an artisan<sup>38</sup> in that it is the "cause of all beings,"<sup>39</sup> and human knowledge which is only "derived from the universe."<sup>40</sup> Again quoting Maimonides, he maintains that only because human knowledge arises from a consideration of things, is it "changing, plural" and unable to comprehend "what is to come and what is infinite"; the reason that divine knowledge does not have these characteristics, on the other hand, is just because it is "prior" to things, "the existence of things following from it."<sup>41</sup>

In another passage Shalom combines this distinction between causal and derivative knowledge, with the distinction, found by him in Gersonides, between knowledge of a thing in its particular aspect and knowledge of it as part of a general order. Here he is dealing with the specific difficulty in assuming that a plurality of individual objects may be comprehended by the simplicity of divine knowledge. He explains that since God knows things through their general order, His knowledge is one, not complex; but since His knowledge is causal, it also comprehends the particular aspect of things: "You must realize that knowledge of the particular in its particular aspect is possible in two ways: (1) A particular thing may be known insofar as it is particular, in other words, primarily and essentially through its particularity. (2) A particular thing may also be known . . . [primarily] in a higher aspect, while it is known as well that it happens to be particular."<sup>42</sup> Divine knowledge, Shalom proceeds to explain, is of the latter type: God knows particular things "primarily and essentially" in their general aspect, and for this reason His knowl-

<sup>36</sup> M. N. III, 21. For Averroes' expression of the same view, cf. *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* XIII, 18, p. 468, lines 3-8; Munk, *Guide*, III, 517, n. 3.

<sup>37</sup> N. Sh. III, 2, 43b-44a, quoting M. N. III, 20, 29b-30a: הוא כלם הוא . . . ואין שתוף ביניהם כמו שאין שתוף בין עצמו ועצמו . . . שומם יחס בין ידיעתו לידיעתו . . . In accordance with Maimonides' theory of divine attributes, Shalom adds that the term *knowledge* is applied to God in an equivocal sense, that it is identical with the essence of God, and that it cannot be apprehended by man. (N. Sh. III, 2, 44a. Cf. M. N. III, 20, 30a; III, 21, 31b; and above, pp. 37-38 and 39-40).

<sup>38</sup> N. Sh. II, 8, 36a; cf. M. N. III, 21, 31a.

<sup>39</sup> N. Sh. XII, i, 2, 199b: עלה לנמצאות כלם ידיעתו ית'. Cf. M. N. III, 21, 31b. In one passage (VII, ii, 6, 118a) Shalom uses this conception to provide a rationale for miracles; he explains that a miracle simply consists in God's knowing the order of things in a different way. For a further explanation of miracles, cf. above, pp. 63.

<sup>40</sup> N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 114a: מהמציאות קנייה וידעתנו קנייה מהמציאות: . . . קנו המציאות מידיעתו, וידעתנו קנייה מהמציאות: . . .

<sup>41</sup> N. Sh. III, 6, 49b-50a, quoting M. N. III, 21, 31b: במציאות . . . נדע כל מה שנדע מפני ההשתכלות במציאות: . . . ואין שתוף תכלית לו וידעותינו מתחדשות מתרבות כפי הדברים . . . והש"י אינו כן ר"ל שלא ידע הדברים מצדם עד שיפול הרבוי וההתחדשות אבל מציאות הדברים ההם נמשכת אחר ידיעתו הקודמת.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 49b: ראוי שתדע הפרטי מצד שהוא פרטי יבתן בשני פנים הא' השגת הידיעה בדבר הפרטי מצד שהוא פרטי רוצה לומר שאמנם יודע ראשונה ובעצמותו מצד הפרטיות. הב' יודע הפרטי לא בעצמות מצד שהוא פרטי, רק מה שקרה לו היותו פרטי יודע שהוא פרטי וזולת מה שנודע ממנו מצד אחר יותר חשוב.





Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*, where it is maintained that "we see that both deliberation and action are causative with regard to the future".<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, Shalom writes: "Aristotle showed that there are things which are initiated in human thought and desire" and are therefore "not necessary but . . . contingent"; consequently "man has free choice."<sup>56</sup>

The assumption of both the freedom of the human will and divine foreknowledge of particular events gives rise to a well-known dilemma which Shalom expresses as follows: "If God already knows which of several alternatives will occur, then the event will occur necessarily and its contingency is removed. But if God does not know which contingency will occur, then He is ignorant of future events, and this would be a defect in Him."<sup>57</sup>

Two solutions to the dilemma are given by Shalom. The first is in the form of an analogy from the knowledge of a physician. Shalom writes that "physicians" who are "expert in the theory and practice of medicine" are able to ascertain the precise temperament of a person and in this way predict his "likes and dislikes . . . without in any way forcing the man to like or dislike anything"; it should, therefore, be true *a fortiori* that the "eternal healer of souls and bodies, who knows the thoughts of men" can predict men's action "without forcing them to act."<sup>58</sup>

This analogy shows only that a future event is not determined by a prediction based on the factors which lead to it. But it would seem that those factors themselves do determine the event. Accordingly, Shalom provides another explanation which he calls "a method which we have devised."<sup>59</sup> This does not mention any factors which bring about the event, being an analogy not from human predictions of the future but rather from human knowledge of the present. Despite Shalom's claim of originality, however, his explanation consists of two contentions which he drew from other writers. The first, which appears in *Philosophia Pauperum*, the Latin work which Shalom translated, is that God knows all events in an *eternal present* time.<sup>60</sup> The second, which could have been learned by Shalom from any of several Jewish writers, is that divine knowledge no more influences a future event than human knowledge influences a present event.<sup>61</sup> Stating the first of these contentions, Shalom explains that for man the knowledge of the future differs from knowledge of the past; since God, on the other hand, is "eternal and not subject to time . . . for Him all things are in an eternal present which contains all of the parts of time, [past, present, and future]"; therefore, future events are known to God in

<sup>55</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* 9, 19a, 7-9.

<sup>56</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 1, 208a: והנה ארסטו בספר המליצה באר שיש הנה דברים התחלתם וחדושם המחשבה ולקיחת התשוקה ושאין כל הדברים הכרחיים אבל יש הנה דברים אפשריים והתורה גם כן תעיד על היות האדם בחיירי. As for the correctness of this interpretation of Aristotle, cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 430-436, where it is argued that the Greek philosophers conceived of *voluntary* action in a different way from that in which the medieval writers conceived of it.

<sup>57</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 1, 208b-209a: האפשר הנה הוא מחלקי האפשר הנה הוא יגיע חלק ידע איזה חלק יגיע ויסתלק האפשר ואם לא ידעו יסכל הדברים העתידים וזה גנות לו יתברך.

<sup>58</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 2, 209a: יכירי מהם ויכירי מהם . . . וידע אשר יאהב וימאס בטבע לפי ידעו המזגים הטבעיים והמקריים מכל אחד מאישי המין האנושי . . . כל שכן ברופא הנפשות והגופות מזגו, וידעתו זו לא תכריח זה האיש לאהוב או לשנא הדברים כלל . . . כד שכן ברופא הנפשות והגופות הנצחיים היודע מחשבות אדם . . . אמנם ידיעתו במחשבות ובפעולות האנושיות לא תכריח לאישים במה שיפעלוהו.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 210a: והאופן שחדשנו.

<sup>60</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Omnia Opera*, edited by A. Borgnet, V, 462 (cf. above p. 1). Albertus cites Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* V, 6. The term used by Albertus is *nunc aeternitatis*; that used by Boethius is *praesenti . . . aeterno* (Loeb Edition, p. 404, lines 79-80). Cf. Plotinus, *Enneades* IV, 4, 12, lines 27-28.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Saadia, *Emunot we-De'ot* IV, 4; Hallelevi, *Cuzari* V, 20; O. H. II, v, 3, 48b.



the "same way that we know present events."<sup>62</sup> Now, employing this notion of divine knowledge in an eternal present time, Shalom explains the compatibility of human free will with divine foreknowledge as follows: "No one has the slightest doubt that he has a clear and accurate knowledge of things as they occur . . . without his knowledge compelling them to occur. But inasmuch as everything future is really present in respect to God, He also has an accurate knowledge of events without His knowledge compelling them in any way."<sup>63</sup>

#### DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Even apart from religious considerations, there could be no question for Shalom that at least some form of providence operates in the universe; for the natural processes whereby the universe is governed were termed providential by the writers with whom he was familiar.<sup>64</sup> The question which does concern Shalom is whether there also is a type of providence which proceeds directly from God and deals with individual men in accordance with their moral and religious merits. His position is that a providence of this type does operate in the world. The statements in which he expresses his view are somewhat disorganized, but can be arranged into an articulate scheme when considered against the background of Maimonides and Crescas.

Maimonides maintained that two types of providence operate in the sublunar world,<sup>65</sup> a general providence over the species of lower animals, and an individual providence over man. In taking this view, Maimonides accepted what he understood to be the position of Aristotle concerning the lower animals, and explained that providence operates there in so far as each species is naturally endowed with certain organs and capacities. On the authority of Scripture, however, he maintained that the members of the human species also enjoy an individual providence.<sup>66</sup> This latter is described by Maimonides in one passage as requiting men for their merits and faults, and as extending to the smallest good and evil fortune which a person enjoys.<sup>67</sup> In another passage, though, it is described as operating through the human intellect to the degree that each person's intellect is developed.<sup>68</sup> The way in which these conditions might be realized, as well as the other technicalities of individual human providence were not explained by Maimonides.<sup>69</sup>

A more elaborate analysis was given by Crescas. First he distinguished two basic types of providence, which he called natural or general, and extranatural. Then, he distinguished

<sup>62</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 2, 209b: להיותו יתברך נצחי ואינו נופל תחת הזמן . . . לכן כל הדברים הם לו . . . יאמר שכל העתידים לו היום אם כן הוא רואה ויודע בעתה הנצחי והעתה הנצחי כולל כל חלקי הזמן . . . כל הדברים העתידים כמו שאנחנו נדע ההווים בעת שיהיו . . .

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*: לא יספק שום אחד ממנו לדעת הדבר בעת שיהיה ידיעה ברורה אמתית . . . ולא תכריח . . . ידיעתו ידיעתו . . . שיהיה, כן הוא יתברך כל העתידים לו הווים ולכן ידעם ידיעה אמתית . . . ולא תכריח ידיעתו . . . ית' ההוא כלל

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Averroes, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* XV, 4, p. 485, line 2; M. N. III, 17 (2).

<sup>65</sup> These are in addition to the providence which operates in the celestial world.

<sup>66</sup> M. N. III, 17 (2); III, 17 (5).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 24b.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 26a.

<sup>69</sup> Gersonides explained the operation of this type of providence as follows: To the degree that each person's intellect is developed, he consciously or unconsciously comes to realize what the movements of the heavens hold in store for him, and so is led to direct his activities in accordance with his best interests. Since the extent to which a person has this realization depends upon his intellectual development, the providence which he enjoys is also to be described as proportional to his intellectual development (M. H. IV, 5).



two subtypes in each of these, producing the following fourfold scheme: (1) purely general or natural providence which operates among all of the lower animal species; (2) a less general providence which operates within the human species through the medium of the human intellect; (3) an extranatural (*bihi itiv*) providence which is to a small degree general and to a large degree individual, this being the providence which is enjoyed by the Hebrew nation thanks to divine choice; (4) an extranatural providence which is completely individual and which requires individuals for their religious merits.<sup>70</sup> It should be noted that there is an implied criticism of Maimonides in this analysis. In Maimonides, providence which operates through the human intellect is termed individual; Crescas, however, terms it "to a larger degree general,"<sup>71</sup> and then adds two other types of individual providence, thereby implying that truly individual providence had been ignored by Maimonides.

Shalom does not refer directly to Crescas' analysis of these four types of providence, nor does he use exactly the same terminology. Nevertheless, his statements do reflect just the four headings in Crescas' scheme.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, first, in several passages Shalom distinguishes *general* from *particular* providence.<sup>73</sup> General providence, he explains, consists in the preservation of the various parts of the universe through "the general law of nature" (*hog ha-teba' ha-kolel*) which "emanates" from God.<sup>74</sup> Illustrations of this are adduced by Shalom from the realms of both inanimate and animate nature. In the former, he explains, God exercises "general providence" in "gathering the sea into its basin so that it does not cover the face of the earth,"<sup>75</sup> and in bringing about "the production of rain in the middle region of the atmosphere."<sup>76</sup> In the latter, "nature" or "natural providence" supplies each species of animal with "organs by which it may draw to itself what is beneficial and repulse what is noxious."<sup>77</sup>

A second type of providence distinguished by Shalom is that which operates through the human intellect and accordingly is enjoyed just to the degree that each man's intellect is developed.<sup>78</sup> Like Crescas, Shalom classifies this as "natural providence." He explains that it is just one case of the natural providence which supplies each species of animal with a set of appropriate organs: Since each type of being is provided for in accordance with its status in the hierarchy of nature, the "rational animal" which is "more excellent than the other animals" naturally receives the "highest degree of providence through his intellect."<sup>79</sup> The precise manner in which Shalom understands this type of providence to operate is not explained by him. But on the assumption that he is following Crescas, he

<sup>70</sup> O. H. II, ii, 1, 34b-35a.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 34b.

<sup>72</sup> On IV, i, 52a.

<sup>73</sup> On XII, ii, 3, 21ob-21a.

<sup>74</sup> N. Sh. V, 2, 61b; IX, i, 153a; XII, ii, 3, 21ob.

<sup>75</sup> N. Sh. IX, i, 153a.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. above, p. 62.

<sup>77</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 3, 21ob.

<sup>78</sup> N. Sh. IV, i, 51a.

<sup>79</sup> N. Sh. IV, i, 51a.

<sup>80</sup> N. Sh. II, 10, 40b, quoting M. N. III, 18, 26b.

<sup>81</sup> N. Sh. IV, i, 51a.

<sup>82</sup> N. Sh. IV, i, 51a.

<sup>83</sup> N. Sh. IV, i, 51a.



would hold that it simply consists in man's being supplied with intellect, the most efficient instrument found among animals, and one that is capable of development according to the efforts of each individual.<sup>80</sup>

A third type of providence distinguished by Shalom is that which is reserved for the people of Israel. Crescas had termed this "extranatural" providence, and Shalom similarly describes it as operating "outside of the law of nature" (*ha-minhag ha-ṭib'i*).<sup>81</sup> He also describes it as a specifically "divine" providence in contrast with the "general" providence to which the other nations are subject.<sup>82</sup> That is to say, Israel is "provided for by God without any intermediary,"<sup>83</sup> and thus can avoid the fate to which it might be destined by natural processes;<sup>84</sup> the gentile nations, on the other hand, are ruled by the stars<sup>85</sup> and by archangels (*sare ma'lah*),<sup>86</sup> and consequently are permanently subject to the laws of nature.<sup>87</sup> Elsewhere, Shalom expresses a slightly different view admitting that the Gentiles do, after all, partake of specifically divine providence; however, he adds that since this type of providence belongs essentially to the people of Israel, it is enjoyed by others "not essentially but only accidentally."<sup>88</sup> In other words, other nations enjoy specifically divine providence only so far as they enter into a relationship with the people of Israel.<sup>89</sup>

Shalom, finally, distinguishes a fourth kind of providence which, like the second type, has individual men as its object, but which is distinguished in operating according to moral, rather than natural principles.<sup>90</sup> This, he explains, consists in divine requital of men "for their good and bad deeds."<sup>91</sup> The form which this type of providence takes, according to Shalom, depends upon the worth of those receiving it: The highest members of the human species enjoy providence through prophecy; others enjoy it through dream;<sup>92</sup> while in the case of lesser men God places desires in their souls which unconsciously lead them to "turn toward things which will result in some good" or to "avoid other things which would result in evil."<sup>93</sup>

It has been seen that the only type of individual providence mentioned by Maimonides was described by him as operating through the human intellect. This apparently would

<sup>80</sup> O. H. II, ii, 2, 35a; cf. M. H. IV, 5, 166.

<sup>81</sup> N. Sh. IV, 1, 54a: בסבות יוצאות מהמנהג הטבעי . . . לחועלתם.

<sup>82</sup> N. Sh. II, 9, 37a: מעלת ההשגחה תהיה כפי מעלת המושגחים ותתחלף בסבת זה בפחות ויתר עד: שתמצא אומה לא תמצא בה ההשגחה האלהית רק ההשגחה המיניית ותמצא אומה לרוב מעלתה תמצא בה ההשגחה האלהית וזו היתה נמצאת בשלמות באומתנו.

<sup>83</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 176b: מושגחים ממנו בלי אמצעי. Cf. O. H. II, ii, 1, 34a.

<sup>84</sup> See above, n. 81.

<sup>85</sup> N. Sh. II, 9, 37b.

<sup>86</sup> N. Sh. X, 3, 176b. By this expression Shalom presumably means the celestial intelligences; cf. above, p. 43.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. N. Sh. II, 9, 37b.

<sup>88</sup> N. Sh. IV, 2, 54a: שאחר שההשגחה האלהית מיוחדת בזה העם אינה מיוחדת בשאר האומות בעצם, רק במקרה.

<sup>89</sup> Shalom gives two reasons for the preëminence of Israel: (1) their knowledge of "divine secrets"; and (2) their being "heroes" (IX, 1, 153a). He also writes that the land of Israel plays a special role in channeling providence; N. Sh. V, 9, 80a: "Just as some plants have their proper place where they are to be found in their perfection . . . so the emanation of providence . . . has its proper place which is more receptive than other places. The Land of Israel is the most choice place . . ." כאשר יש לנטיעות מקום מיוחד להמצאם על תכלית השלמות . . . כן יש לשפע ההשגחה בהשלמת האדם (מקום מיוחד יוכן בו יותר משאר המקומות בקבול אותו השפע. ולהיות מבחר המקומות ארץ ישראל . . . Cf. Hallevi, *Cuzari* II, 10.

<sup>90</sup> N. Sh. XII, ii, 3, 210b-211a.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 211a: ההשגחה שיש לו להיותו רואה ויודע כל מעשיו אם טוב ואם רע לתת לאיש כדרכיו.

<sup>92</sup> N. Sh. VI, 5, 93a-b; cf. M. H. IV, 5, 166.

<sup>93</sup> N. Sh. VI, 5, 93a: ישגיה הש"י בהם שישים בהם תשוקות נפשיות לכיוון לדברים מה יגיע להם . . . טוב מהם בזולת שישערו לטוב ההוא ולברור מדברים אחרים יגיע להם רע Cf. M. H. IV, 5, 167.



exclude the conception of a providence that operates in accordance with nonintellectual, religious principles. Shalom, however, has been seen to follow Crescas in writing that, in addition to providence enjoyed through the intellect, men also enjoy a specifically divine providence in consideration of their religious and moral merits. Now, in accordance with his claim to be following Maimonides on all points, Shalom endeavors to show that the position which he has adopted is in fact also the position of Maimonides. To this end he points out that the term *sekel*, which has the technical sense of *intellect* in the medieval literature, has a wider sense in the Bible.<sup>94</sup> Playing on this term, he explains that when Maimonides described providence as a function of the intellect, he meant not merely intellect (*sekel*) in the narrow sense, but perfection "in knowledge, in deeds, and in both";<sup>95</sup> therefore, Maimonides should also be understood as having believed that the "performance of the commandments" contributes to the "perfection of man" and thereby determines the amount of providence which a man receives.<sup>96</sup>

*Summary.*—The position which Shalom takes on divine knowledge and providence is that which would have been expected from his general attitude. He maintains that God has knowledge of individual events even before they occur, that this knowledge is compatible with human free will, and that a divine providence operates in the universe which requites individual men for their deeds. In support of his views, he draws material from several sources. To solve the difficulties in assuming divine knowledge of particular objects, he follows Maimonides and cites the principle of the radical difference between causative divine knowledge and derivative human knowledge. To harmonize divine foreknowledge with human free will, he uses the conception, apparently drawn from Albertus,

<sup>94</sup> The examples cited by Shalom (II, 10, 41b) are: Gen. 48: 14; Deut. 29: 8; Jer. 9: 23, in each of which he finds that the root *skl* has a moral connotation. This argument does not mention the fact that Maimonides wrote in Arabic where the word for intellect is 'aql. But Shalom, who presumably knew no Arabic at all, could have supposed that Maimonides used the Arabic word corresponding to *sekel* in all of the connotations of the Hebrew word.

<sup>95</sup> N. Sh. II, 10, 40b: וראוי שתבין דעת הרב שאמר שההשגחה נמשכת אחר השכל אמנם רצה בזה אם בדעות אם במעשה אם בשניהם . . . שהשלמות האנושי תלוי בשני עניינים בדעות ובמעשה.

<sup>96</sup> Implied in N. Sh. II, 10, 40b: שאמר שההשגחה כפי השכל ואם כן אין למעשה: והמצות רומש בשלמות האדם.

The question of the purpose of the ritual commandments is answered by Shalom as follows: "Some of the practical commandments" have no value in themselves but serve "only as a preliminary to intellectual thought"; that is to say, they serve only to instill moral perfection (cf. M. N. III, 54, 70a) while moral perfection, in turn, serves only as a preliminary to intellectual perfection (cf. M. N. I, 34, 54b). On the other hand, there are some rites which "are intended for their own sake" (N. Sh. VIII, 4, 127a-128a: אינן רק הצעה למושכלות אלא הנה אמת שיש מצות מעשיות בתורה ויש מצות נכבדות מאלה שיורה על הדעות האמתיות בנפש . . . החלק הזה מהמצוות המעשיות שאמרנו אינם הצעה למושכלות אבל המעשה הגופני יורה על המושכל שבנפש כמו שהתנועה הגלגלית תורה (על הציור השכלי שלנפש הגלגל והנה המעשה מכון בעצמו).

This is explained by the notion that man is composed of a body and a soul which are connected in such a way that the actions of the body reflect the beliefs of the soul, "perfect practices" indicating a "perfection in belief" in the soul (N. Sh. II, 3, 30b: יורו . . . המעשים השלמים העשויים ביושר . . . (על שלמות הדעות והנפש) (הפעולה המגונה תורה על מום בנפש הפועל כמו שהשורה נכבדת מהחמר כך העיון נכבד מהמעשה וכשם שהחמר לאותה המצוה . . . והצורה הוא העיון וכשם שהצורה נכבדת מהחמר כך המעשה נושא העיון ובו קיומו). Total human perfection, accordingly, is a condition in which the soul contains true belief, while the body performs the perfect practices which correspond to those beliefs. Both of these requirements are met in the superior (*nikbad*) type of practical commandments. Corresponding to the two aspects in man, these superior commandments contain a "matter" which is the "practice" and a form which is the implied "theory" (N. Sh. XI, 3, 193a-b: החמר הוא המעשה: הניבוי הוא המעשה וכשם שהחמר לאותה המצוה . . . והצורה הוא העיון וכשם שהצורה נכבדת מהחמר כך העיון נכבד מהמעשה וכשם שהחמר לאותה המצוה . . . והצורה הוא העיון וכשם שהצורה נכבדת מהחמר כך העיון נכבד מהמעשה). In acting out these commandments a person brings his body and soul into harmony in just the same way that the "movement of the sphere reflects the intellectual concept in the soul of the sphere." Therefore the very acting out of the ritual is of value (N. Sh. VIII, 4, 128a; the Hebrew text is cited earlier in this note).



that the deity exists in an eternal present time. And in order to place individual divine providence within a larger scheme of the government of the universe, he reproduces Crescas' distinction of four different types of providence, ranging from the completely *natural* to the completely *divine*.

Up until this point Shalom merely has to apply given technical principles in the proper way. A peculiar problem, however, is presented by Maimonides' statements on providence. Maimonides described the providence which governs individual men as operating solely through the human intellect. Shalom, on the other hand, inclines to adopt Crescas' scheme which reserves a unique type of providence for the people of Israel, and another unique type for individual men who have the requisite religious and moral attainments. Shalom's solution is characteristic. He neither grants that Maimonides was in error, nor relinquishes the view which he considers correct, but rather undertakes to harmonize Maimonides' statements with the view which he adopts. The device which Shalom here employs to this end is just a play on a word, so that it may be questioned whether he really thought that he was giving an honest interpretation of Maimonides.



## HUMAN SOUL, INTELLECT, AND IMMORTALITY

THE MOST important psychological topic for Shalom is the question of the general nature and the destiny of the human soul and intellect.<sup>1</sup> As is his custom, he arrives at his own position through a consideration of Maimonides, Gersonides, and Crescas.

<sup>1</sup> While Shalom is usually concerned only with the intellectual faculty of the human soul, he does provide three lists in which all of the faculties of the soul are distinguished from different points of view. He writes:

(a) "It has been shown in the *De Anima* that in the infant first the nutritive faculty is generated, then the sensitive, animal faculty, then the rational faculty." (N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 114a: כבר ההבאר: החיניג בספר הנפש שמתחדש תחלה מהולד הוא הכה הון עוד יתחדש בו אחר זה הכה המריש החיניג (אחר (ש)יתחדש בו הכה הדברי). The reference is presumably to *De Anima* II, 2, 413b, 11-13; 3, 414b, 29-415a, 8, where, although other faculties of the soul are given, nutrition, sensation, and intellect are clearly the most important since they are the faculties which distinguish the three types of living being: vegetable, animal, and man. Cf. H. Bonitz *Index Aristotelicus* (Berlin, 1870), p. 864, col. 2, lines 52 ff. For the notion that the development of the child recapitulates the scale of nature, cf. E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, II, 2<sup>4</sup> (Leipzig, 1921), 513.

(b) "The physicians" erroneously held that there are three separate souls in man, the "natural, vital, and psychic"; their error lay in their failing to realize that the "brain, heart [correcting to *weha-leb*] and liver are only subjects" or "instruments" whereby the "soul exercises its functions and are not each the seat of a separate soul (N. Sh. XIII, 5, 213a: שהנפשות רבות . . . שהנפש אחת והלבד עד שהרופאים אמרו שהם שלש טבעות חיוניות ונפשות. ולא ידעו . . . כי הנמה (הנעצב) [והלבל] והלבד כל אחד מהם הוא כלי שבו נפשה נפשה אחת. . . .) The correct view is that there is only "one" soul in man containing "several faculties" (N. Sh. VIII, 4, 126b: שהנפש היא: אחת ושלשה כחות. . . .) Shalom's statement concerning "the physicians" is a paraphrase of Maimonides, *Shemonah Peraqim* I, where it is stated that although the "chief of the physicians," i.e., Galen, believed that the natural, vital, and psychic functions are performed by three separate souls, the correct view is that they are performed by faculties of a single soul. Cf. Avicenna, *Canon of Medicine* I, 1, 6, 1 (Hebrew text [Naples, 1492], p. 5b; Latin text [Venice, 1582], p. 25b; Arabic text [Rome, 1593], p. 33), where, although Galen is not described as believing that man has three separate souls, his position is distinguished from the "correct" philosophic position. For Galen's statement of his own view, cf. *Omnia Opera*, edited by C. G. Kühn (Leipzig, 1821-1833), XV, 292. For the liver, heart, and brain as the seats of a natural, vital, and psychic faculty (these latter not quite corresponding to the nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual faculties), cf. Galen, *Omnia Opera*, IX, 492; Avicenna, *Canon*, I, 1, 6, 1; Maimonides, *Hanhagat ha-Berī'ut*, edited by S. Muntner (Jerusalem, 1957), p. 65, the Arabic of which is quoted by Munk, *Guide*, I, 355, n. 1; Maimonides in this passage speaks of *spirits* rather than *faculties*. (In the passage quoted above from Shalom, I have corrected *weha-eseb*, "the nerve," to *weha-leb*, "the heart," since the "nerves" were considered to be instruments of the *psychic* not the *vital* soul. Cf. Galen, XV, 293; Avicenna, *Canon* I, 1, 6, 5; Maimonides, *Hanhagat ha-Berī'ut*, p. 66.)

(c) The "ten governing faculties" are the "five internal senses and the five external senses" (N. Sh. VI, 8, 97a: *עשר כחות מנהיגות . . . ה' חושים פנימיים והה' חושיים*). The former are: "the imagination, the common sensum, the cognitive faculty, the memory, . . . the intellectual faculty" (N. Sh. VIII, 3, 124a: *יחכמה המדמה, והחוש המשותף, והמחשבה, והזכור . . . הכה השכלי*). Of various lists of internal senses given by the medieval philosophers, that of Averroes seems most likely to be the one that underlies this list given by Shalom; for Averroes, cf. H. Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophic Texts," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXVIII (1935), 108-109. On the functions of these inner senses, cf. Wolfson, *ibid.*, pp. 89-90, 92-94. The five external senses are listed by Shalom as "taste . . . touch . . . hearing . . . vision . . . smell (N. Sh. XIII, 1, 211b: *חוש הראות . . . חוש השמע . . . חוש המשוש . . . חוש הטעם . . . חוש הריח*). In one passage, Shalom places beside the view that there are five external senses, another view, held by "some," according to which there are eight (N. Sh. X, 3, 175a). Shalom explains that the two views are reflected in the fringes which are to be placed on the four corners of one's garments, rabbinic law requiring eight fringes, and custom requiring five knots. Cf. *Jewish*



The statements of Maimonides, taken on their face value, reproduce one of several versions of the theory of intellect generally accepted by the Arabic Aristotelians.<sup>2</sup> Maimonides stated the theory as follows: The human soul is not a substance in the sense of a being which is capable of independent existence, for it cannot exist apart from a body.<sup>3</sup> Therefore the only aspect in man which might conceivably be immortal is the human intellect.<sup>4</sup> There are two successive stages in which the human intellect makes its appearance: the *material*, and the *acquired* intellect. The former is the most primitive stage of human intellect, containing nothing but the potentiality for thought.<sup>5</sup> It had been debated whether or not the material intellect is an actual, separate substance which in some way comes from without to join the human body and soul at birth.<sup>6</sup> The position followed by Maimonides on this question is that the material intellect is not a substance; it is "merely a disposition" (*koah ha-hakanah lebad*) or faculty of the human soul,<sup>7</sup> one of several faculties which the soul possesses. Maimonides further took the peculiar view that the material human intellect, beyond being a mere faculty of the soul, is a faculty which is "in the body and inseparable from it."<sup>8</sup> This statement was interpreted by the commentators on his works as meaning that the material intellect is actually "mixed" with the body;<sup>9</sup> that is, it is actually located within the body and is completely dependent upon it in the same way that each of the nonintellectual faculties of the soul, such as sensation or imagination, is completely dependent upon the physical organ in which it is located.

When the human potentiality for thought which resides in the material intellect is realized, Maimonides explained, there appears a new grade of intellect called the acquired intellect. This consists simply in a hypostatization of the thoughts which each man succeeds in thinking or "acquiring."<sup>10</sup> It was clear that nobody could reach the level of acquired intellect except by virtue of the material intellect with which he is born, since it is only by virtue of his material intellect that man begins to think. Still, Maimonides was understood to conceive of the acquired intellect not as a development of the material intellect, but rather as a new entity which can replace the material intellect after thought has begun.<sup>11</sup> Maimonides further emphasized the fundamental difference between the two levels of intellect. In contrast with the material intellect which he held to be completely unsubstantial, he described the acquired intellect as an incorporeal substance

*Encyclopedia*, s. v. *Fringes*; Asher b. Jehiel, *Hilkot Šišit*, appendix. The fivefold enumeration of senses is also referred to by Shalom on pp. 31b, 81a, 175a, 211a. The source of the eightfold division is probably a passage in Avicenna where those who spoke of eight senses are said to have reached that number by subdividing the sense of touch into four parts; cf. *Canon* I, 1, 6, 5. For the enumeration of more than five senses by other Hebrew writers, cf. D. Kaufmann, *Die Sinne* (Budapest, 1884), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Avicenna, *Kitab al-Shifā'*, *Psychology* I, 5, edited by F. Rahman as *Avicenna's De Anima* (London, 1959), p. 50; Falaquera, *Moreh ha-Moreh* (Pressburg, 1837), p. 141; Munk, *Guide*, I, 307-308, note. The theory goes back to Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 4; 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. N. I, 70, 105a-b; II, proposition 11, 5a-b.

<sup>4</sup> M. N. I, 74, 128a.

<sup>5</sup> M. N. I, 68, 101a.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. M. H. I, 1, 13.

<sup>7</sup> M. N. I, 70, 105a.

<sup>8</sup> M. N. I, 72, 115a: *זה הכח המדבר הוא כח בגוף ובלתי נפרד ממנו*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Narboni's commentary on M. N. I, 68 (p. 13b), quoted in N. Sh. VIII, 2, 121b; Shem Tob on M. N. I, 68, 99b.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. N. I, 72, 115a-b; Ibn Tibbon's glossary in *Moreh Nebukim* entitled "Perush meha-Millot ha-Zarot," s.v. *ha-sekel ha-niqneh*; Falaquera, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, p. 141.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. O. H. II, vi, 1, 52b; N. Sh. VIII, 2, 121b.



which enjoys an existence completely independent of the human body and soul.<sup>12</sup> It followed that the acquired intellect, and it alone, can enjoy immortality: As an independent, incorporeal entity it would be unaffected by the death of the body; but the material intellect, a mere faculty of the soul which like the soul cannot exist except in conjunction with a body, would perish when the body dies.<sup>13</sup>

Besides these two grades of human intellect, there is a third important intellect in the scheme which Maimonides presented. This is the *active* intellect, understood to be a being outside of man and identified, specifically, as the lowest of the celestial intelligences.<sup>14</sup> In addition to performing a number of other functions<sup>15</sup> the active intellect, Maimonides explained, serves as the efficient cause which brings about actual human thought.<sup>16</sup> By a process of emanation, it continually makes available an entire body of distinct generalized thoughts comprising all the general knowledge to which man can possibly attain. When images are presented to a man's material intellect by the imaginative faculty of the soul, corresponding general thoughts are selected out of the continuous emanation from the active intellect. These thoughts appear in a hypostatized form and attach themselves to the person in question as an acquired intellect.<sup>17</sup>

These are the important features in Maimonides' scheme as it appeared to Shalom, and all of them reappeared in Gersonides with only minor difference. Like Maimonides, Gersonides explained that man is born in possession of a material intellect which is nothing but an unsubstantial "disposition" for thought;<sup>18</sup> that through the agency of the active intellect he has the power of attaining an acquired intellect;<sup>19</sup> and that the acquired intellect constitutes the sole immortal aspect in man.<sup>20</sup> The one important respect in which Gersonides departed from the basic position of Maimonides lay in his following the consensus of Arabic and Jewish Aristotelians to oppose the suggestion that the human material intellect is "mixed" with the body. Gersonides wrote that the material intellect is "unmixed"; this, he explained, means that although as a faculty of the human soul, the intellect must, like the soul, exist in conjunction with a body, nevertheless it does not employ the body as a direct instrument in the activity of thought.<sup>21</sup>

The statements of Maimonides and Gersonides posed two separate problems for Shalom: first, whether the material human intellect is mixed with the body as Maimonides seemed to hold, or unmixed as Gersonides held; then, whether, as both appeared to have held, the material intellect is a completely unsubstantial being, and only its replacement, the acquired intellect, can be immortal.

<sup>12</sup> M. N. I, 72, 115b.

<sup>13</sup> M. N. I, 70, 105a.

<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 50.

<sup>15</sup> See above, pp. 50, 51, 52.

<sup>16</sup> M. N. II, 4, 20a-b. The argument is repeated by Shalom in an expanded form, N. Sh. VIII, 9, 143b: *ההכנה הזו לא ימנע מחלוקה או תהיה מניעה עצמה או תהיה מניעה חוץ מעצמה אם הא' נמצא שהדבר יגיע עצמו ויצא מהכח לפועל בזולת מוציא וזה שקר. אם הב' או יהיה מניעה נבדל או לא ושקר שיחיה בלתי נבדל שנותן השכל שכל בהכרח יהיה אם כן נבדל*

<sup>17</sup> Cf. M. N. I, 72, 115b, taken together with II, 37, 80b. I could not find this function of the imagination stated by Maimonides, but it may be assumed to represent his view. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 7, 431a, 14-17; Avicenna, *Shifā', Psychology* V, 5, edited by F. Rahman, p. 235; Efodi on M. N. I, 68, 101a; M. H. I, 6, 38; 11, 82; N. Sh. VIII, 2, 122a; below, p. 93. The theory that human thoughts are emanations from the active intellect is that of Avicenna; cf. F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* (London, 1958), p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> M. H. I, 5, 35.

<sup>19</sup> M. H. I, 6, 37; 11, 82.

<sup>20</sup> M. H. I, 11, 85, taken together with I, 5, 36.

<sup>21</sup> M. H. I, 5, 36.



To decide the former problem, Shalom repeats a standard Aristotelian argument which is designed to show that the human intellect cannot be mixed with the body. The argument implicitly assumes that thought consists in the presence of the form of a thing in the intellect,<sup>22</sup> and also that the intellect is adequate to represent things exactly as they are.<sup>23</sup> Shalom reasons as follows: If the material intellect were "mixed" with either the body or one of the nonintellectual parts of the soul, then "one of two impossibilities would result. Either the form . . . with which the rational faculty is mixed would interfere with its reception of [other] forms, or it would alter those forms. In either case the result would be that the intellect would not contain forms, truly corresponding to things [in the external world]";<sup>24</sup> but this is contradicted by the tacit assumption that the intellect does have the power of representing things exactly. Therefore the human intellect is shown to be "unmixed" with the body;<sup>25</sup> that is, the intellect is sufficiently independent of the body so that it is not acted upon, and does not "suffer affection,"<sup>26</sup> from the body during the process of thought.

Nevertheless, the independence of the human intellect could not be described as absolute since it was generally accepted that during the process of its actualization the intellect stands in need of a body to provide it with sensations; as Shalom explains, the human intellect operates by "abstracting forms from their accidents."<sup>27</sup> The proper way of defining the relationship between body and intellect, Shalom therefore writes, is to say that the human power of thought exists "together with" the body, without actually being "mixed" with it, and without directly employing it as an instrument in thought.<sup>28</sup> Despite the fact that Maimonides' statements ostensibly indicated a different position,<sup>29</sup> Shalom concludes that Maimonides really meant to take the same position which he himself now takes, i.e., that the human potentiality for thought exists "together with" the body, but is not mixed with it.<sup>30</sup>

The second, and more fundamental, problem which Shalom considers is posed by the theory, apparently held by both Maimonides and Gersonides, that the material human intellect is unsubstantial and that the acquired intellect does not develop out of it but is a separate entity which is produced from without to replace it. Crescas had rejected that theory as incompatible with the traditional explanation of the immortality of the human

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 8, 432a, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II, 19, 100b, 8-9.

<sup>24</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 2, 122a-b: הנה יתחייב וואלס הכח הזה הנה יתחייב וואלס הכח הזה וזהו שיקרא השכל ההיולאני אם יהיה בלתי מעורב לצורה מהצורות ההיולאניות כלל וזה שהכח הזה והוא שיקרא השכל ההיולאני אם יהיה שישכיל הדברים כלם כלומר שיקבל צורת הדברים כלם הנה ראוי שלא יהיה מעורב עם צורה מהצורות כלומר שלא יעורב עם הנושא שימצא בו כמו שימצאו שאר הכחות ההיולאניות וזה שהוא אם היה מעורב בצורה מהצורות היה מחוייב בו אחד משני דברים אם שתעיק צורת הנושא שהכח מעורב עמה הצורות שיקבלם הכח ההוא או שישנה אותם כלומר שתשנה הצורות המקובלות ואלו היה זה כן היו צורות הדברים בלתי נמצאות בשכל על אמתתם. The argument is drawn from *De Anima* III, 4, 429a, 18-21, and Shalom is here quoting Averroes' *Middle Commentary* on the *De Anima*; the passage from Averroes has been cited by S. Munk, *Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe* (Paris, 1859), p. 445. On p. 125b, Shalom adapts a similar argument from the monograph of Averroes known in Hebrew as *Ma'amar Efsharut ha-Debequt* which has been partially edited by P. Hannes (Halle, 1892); cf. Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 192, for a further identification of the monograph. The passage employed by Shalom appears on p. 2, lines 6 ff. of Hannes' edition.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 144b: לא שתתפעל מקבולה המושכלות.

<sup>27</sup> N. Sh. VI, 8, 97b: הצורות ממקריהם וישיבם צורות כוללות.

<sup>28</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 124b: אבל לפי שיהיה נמצא עם הגוף . . . לפי שיתערב בו . . . אכל לפי שהוא נמצא עם הגוף. Cf. 125b: לא לפי שיתערב בו . . . אכל לפי שהוא נמצא עם הגוף. Shalom drew these formulations from Narboni's commentary on *Guide* I, 68 (p. 13b) and M. H. I, 5, 36.

<sup>29</sup> See above, nn. 8, 9.

<sup>30</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 124b.



soul, and Shalom agrees with Crescas. Their common objection is immediately directed against the single supposition that the acquired intellect consists in nothing but a hypostatization of human thought. That being the nature of the acquired intellect, Shalom reasons, only intellectual activity could bring it into existence.<sup>31</sup> But since the acquired intellect was considered to be the sole immortal aspect in man, immortality would depend exclusively upon a person's intellectual attainments. On this theory, therefore, only intellectual activity, and no other type of human behavior could have ultimate value for man, and there would be "no [ultimate] profit at all in performing any religious rite."<sup>32</sup> This implication is opposed, however, by the binding religious dogma that immortality results from the performance of religious commandments, which involve "speech" and "practice" as well as "thought."<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the notion of acquired intellect, at least when conceived as consisting in nothing but the product of human thought, must be rejected.

For Crescas this conclusion had led to a rejection of the entire notion of acquired intellect, and with it, the entire scheme of intellect presented by Maimonides and Gersonides.<sup>34</sup> Shalom, however, undertakes to correct or, as he would prefer to put it, to give the right interpretation of those two writers.<sup>35</sup> He starts with a definition of the human soul. In accordance with it, he reinterprets the notions of material intellect and acquired intellect. Then, on the basis of this reinterpretation, he gives an explanation of human immortality which, he feels, accommodates religious activity.

Neither Maimonides nor Gersonides, Shalom claims, in fact believed that the human soul is inextricably connected with the human body. They really considered the human soul to be a substance, that is, an entity which is created apart from the body and which, although immediately joined to the body at birth, is not absolutely connected with it. This interpretation is justified by Shalom on the basis of statements by Maimonides concerning the time when "the soul will be separated from the body," and by arguments of Gersonides to the effect that the material intellect, and not merely the acquired intellect, is immortal.<sup>36</sup> Two alternative definitions of the soul as a substance are given by Shalom. In the definition which he uses more frequently, he expressly follows Crescas and defines the human soul as a "divine spiritual substance" which is "disposed to thought."<sup>37</sup> By this he means that the soul is a substance which is not corporeal, but is nevertheless inferior to those substances which consist in pure thought. It is only dis-

<sup>31</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 2, 122b-123a. Cf. O. H. II, vi, 1, 52b.

<sup>32</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 2, 123a: אין יתרון בעשיית המצוה כלל.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*: הורה הכתוב בפירוש ששלמות האדם תלוי בשלשה עניינים בדבר מחשבה ומעשה.

<sup>34</sup> O. H. II, vi, 1, 53b.

<sup>35</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 123b: בראותי שני אלו החכמים נטו אחר זה הדעת קנאתי לכבודם ובפרט לכבוד הרב שכל אמרותיו צרופות . . . איכה נחשבו לנבלי חרש . . . על כן ראיתי בחזקת היד לשנס מתני העיון והחקירה לראות אם יחוייב על אלו הדעות מה שחייבו זה החכם . . .

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 124a, quoting M. N. III, 51, 68a; *ibid.*, 124b, quoting M. H. I, 11, 13. These quotations do not quite prove the point since they do not state that the human soul is a substance. However, Shalom seems to feel that that will be implied once Maimonides and Gersonides are shown to have believed that the human soul itself, or part of it, can eventually be separated from the body and exist apart.

<sup>37</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 144a: Shalom is following O. H. II, vi, 1, 53b-54a: נפש האדם . . . עצם רוחני מוכן אל ההשכלה ובחלי משכיל בפעל בעצמו. Cf. N. Sh. VIII, 8, 141a: כמו שגדרה ה' חסדאי. The designation "divine" which does not appear here in Crescas' definition is added to indicate that the soul is created by God *ex nihilo* (*milo dabar*, N. Sh. VIII, 8, 141b), and perhaps also to indicate that it was only through an act of divine grace that "the material and the intellect," which are "two opposites," could be combined into one being in the creation of man (cf. N. Sh. V, 7, 74a).



posed to thought, that is, it originally contains no actual thought or other consciousness, but possesses the potentiality for thinking as one of its faculties. In an alternative definition, Shalom describes the human soul not as a "spiritual," but as an "intellectual substance."<sup>38</sup> This means again that the soul is a substance which is not corporeal, but it further means that besides possessing a potentiality for thought, the soul, even in its most primitive state, does already contain a certain minimal amount of innate actual thought in the form of the "first notions" or primary axioms of all reasoning.<sup>39</sup>

It is in accordance with the conception of the soul as a substance that Shalom interprets the statements of Maimonides and Gersonides on the material intellect and the acquired intellect: The material intellect is that faculty in the soul which contains the potentiality for thought. Therefore, although not a substance itself, the material intellect is more than a mere disposition for thought with no substantial status. It is one aspect of the substance of the human soul and thus shares in its substantiality.<sup>40</sup> The acquired intellect, by a similar train of reasoning, is not construed as an entity, completely independent of the human soul, which replaces the material intellect while the latter is "destroyed" (*ye'afes*).<sup>41</sup> It is instead to be taken as the substance of the human soul itself after it has risen to a more perfect state. The human soul according to this explanation is a kind of "matter."<sup>42</sup> By a proper course of development, the soul can reach a point where there is "poured out upon it a spirit of intellectual thought"<sup>43</sup> that serves as the "form" which perfects that matter.<sup>44</sup> And the thought which is poured out upon the soul and perfects it is nothing other than the "acquired intellect."<sup>45</sup> Now it was understood that when a form

This and the following are to be taken as definitions of the *human* soul. As a definition of soul in general, Shalom repeats the Aristotelian formula: "The soul is the first entelechy of a natural organic body (N. Sh. VII, ii, 5, 113a: להנפש הוא שלמות ראשון לגשם טבעי כללי). Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 1, 412a, 28-29.

<sup>38</sup> N. Sh. XI, 8, 198b: הדעת האמתי בנפש שהיא עצם שכלי מוכן אל ההשכלה בלתי משכיל בפעל בעצמו: ר"ק המושכלות הראשונות.

<sup>39</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 10, 147b: דעתי בעצם הנפש וזה שעם שאמרנו שהנפש בתחלה אינה משכלת אמנם: איננה נעדרת ההשכלה לגמרי אבל היא משכלת כל ההשכלות בכח מצד אותה ההשכלה הנמצאת בתחלת עניינה בפועל וזה שהיא משכלת המושכלות הראשונות בלי למוד רק מצד טבעה . . . וזה הפך מ'ש בשם הפילוסוף שאמר שהמושכלות הראשונות נקנות מהחוש. Shalom here calls this his "own view" and contrasts it with the view of Aristotle. Cf. below, p. 92.

The alternative definitions of the soul are apparently designed to circumvent a certain argument of Gersonides. Gersonides (M. H. I, 4, 34) had maintained that no incorporeal substance can be present in man at birth because (a) any incorporeal substance is an *intellectual* substance, that is, a substance which consists in pure thought, while (b) man possesses no thought at birth, since even the primary axioms of thought are acquired through the senses (cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II, 19, 100a, 10-11). In the definition of the soul as a "spiritual" substance, Crescas and, following him, Shalom deny, in effect, the former premise; they assert that there may after all exist an incorporeal substance which is only "disposed to thought" but does not consist in pure actual thought. As Shalom explains, "spiritual" denotes that which is "not corporeal since it is not compound" but is also "not an intellect since it has no actual thought" (N. Sh. VIII, 9, 147b). In his second definition Shalom is in effect denying the second premise. He maintains that even "without any study" and "by its very nature" the human soul is not completely "devoid of thought"; it already has knowledge of the first notions, and therefore is already an "intellectual" substance at birth (N. Sh. VIII, 10, 147b; the Hebrew text was quoted at the beginning of this note).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. N. Sh. VIII, 3, 124a: הכח השכלי שאינו צריך לכלי . . . הנפש עצם אחד מקבל אלו הכחות . . . גופיי בעצמו לא יפסד בהפסד שאר הכחות הצריכים לכלי גופני.

<sup>41</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 144b: ואין ראוי שיובן מאמרי שיתעצם בהשכלה שיעתק עצמותה לעצמות אחר ויאפס: העצם הקודם אבל שיתעלה העצם הקודם במעלה.

<sup>42</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 8, 140a. See below, n. 48. It is this conception, of course, that underlies the expression "material intellect"; cf. Falaquera, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, p. 141.

<sup>43</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 142b: יערה עליה רוח ההשכלה.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 143a: עצם רוחני . . . וההשכלה צורתה.

<sup>45</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 123b: צורתה שהיא השכל הנקנה.



appears in the sensible matter of the physical world, the bond between matter and form is impermanent and is eventually broken.<sup>46</sup> The situation is different, Shalom contends, when the matter of the soul is perfected by the acquired intellect: In that case there no longer exists any distinction between the soul and its form; the two become completely "united."<sup>47</sup> To the extent that the very substance of the soul is transformed (*tit'asem minmenah*),<sup>48</sup> and the soul itself becomes "an actually thinking substance."<sup>49</sup> In other words, the soul not merely receives the acquired intellect as its form, but is itself transformed into an acquired intellect. From a substance containing only the potentiality for thought,<sup>50</sup> or only a minimum of thought,<sup>51</sup> it now becomes a substance consisting in nothing but pure thought; it becomes the acquired intellect which Maimonides and Gersonides described. Yet despite this transformation, Shalom, still as part of his interpretation of Maimonides and Gersonides, insists that the original substance of the soul does not disappear. The soul is the "same as it was before it began to think";<sup>52</sup> "nothing has occurred . . . except the transformation from potentiality to actuality."<sup>53</sup> One is to conceive then of a complete transformation of the soul in which the soul still retains its original identity. This condition is sometimes described by Shalom as an elevation in degree: The person involved does "not undergo a transition from one substance to another," but rather from one "level" to another;<sup>54</sup> the transition in question, though, is nothing less than an ascent from "the level of the brute to the level of the angels."<sup>55</sup>

As for the cause of actual human thought, and hence of the intellectual development of the soul, Shalom states two alternative views. The first is the view, stated by Maimonides and Gersonides, that the active intellect, the lowest of the celestial intelligences, is the cause of actual human thought; the second view is that this function of the active intellect may be dispensed with.

In those passages in which he describes actual human thought as dependent upon the active intellect, Shalom explains that the latter "stands in the same relation to [the material intellect of] man that the sun stands to the faculty of vision"; just as vision becomes actual through the light which proceeds from the sun, so the rational faculty is rendered actual by "something" which proceeds from the active intellect and is "impressed upon the rational faculty."<sup>56</sup> This "something" which proceeds from the active intellect is presumably identical with a certain "divine emanation" which, is described

<sup>46</sup> Cf. M. N. III, 8, 10b, and below, n. 48. Also cf. above, p. 49.

<sup>47</sup> See next note.

<sup>48</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 8, 140a.

<sup>49</sup> According to the definition of the soul as a "spiritual" substance; cf. above, n. 37. According to the definition of the soul as an "intellectual" substance; cf. above, n. 38, 39.

<sup>50</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 10, 148a.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 149a.

<sup>52</sup> See the passage quoted in n. 41.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. M. N. III, 18, 27a; *Kuah Hen*, chap. 3; below, n. 108.

<sup>54</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 144b.

<sup>55</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 8, 141a.

<sup>56</sup> The passage is to be found in Z. Filipowski, *Sefer ha-Asif* (Leipzig, 1849), p. 5; Arabic original, *Kitab al-Siyasat al-Madaminyah* (Hyderabad, A. H. 1346), p. 7. The analogy goes back to Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 5, 430a, 15-17, and Plato, *Republic* VI, 508.



as "enlightening" the human mind and "causing it to pass from potentiality to actuality."<sup>57</sup> By terming the emanation in question "divine," Shalom means that, although its immediate source is the active intellect, its ultimate source is the deity.<sup>58</sup> The other passages, in which Shalom dispenses with the active intellect as a factor in human intellectual development, are based upon his definition of the human soul as a specifically "intellectual" substance, that is, a substance which always contains a certain amount of thought in the form of innate ideas.<sup>59</sup> Shalom reasons that the presence of actual thought in man was ascribed to an external agent only because there was no other way of explaining its origin. But by assuming that man is born already in possession of certain innate ideas, "all" of the higher levels of thought may be explained as "deductions" from what is latent in the thought with which man is born.<sup>60</sup> On this assumption, therefore, it will be "naturally possible to reach the level of speculation . . . without a teacher,"<sup>61</sup> that is to say, the deductions which are latent in the innate ideas will unfold themselves without the aid of the active intellect. Shalom describes the second view, which dispenses with the role of the active intellect, as "superior" to the first view which accepts it.<sup>62</sup> In any case, whether or not the active intellect is assumed to be a factor, he insists that divine aid through revelation is also necessary to complete the intellectual development of man. If left to its own resources, the human intellect will always fall short of "discovering the truth."<sup>63</sup> and will not be able to "reach divine secrets."<sup>64</sup> Consequently, recourse must be had to the instruction which is offered by the "true Torah";<sup>65</sup> in other words, Scripture reveals the truths which lie beyond the powers of the unaided human intellect.

<sup>57</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 73a: חזקתא דמחנה דביתא דרבי יוחנן . . . שפיר ליה.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. above, pp. 45-46.  
<sup>59</sup> Cf. above, p. 83.

<sup>60</sup>N. Sh. VII, 10, 148a: חשבתי משלם . . . הפש ביהמה לשלוח לארבעה עשר  
Cf. above, p. 83.

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*: "אשר כל אדם הוא שוה לפני ה'". The superiority of this view in Shalom's mind probably lies

<sup>63</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 8, 141a: see below, p. 65. Here Shalom is arguing on the assumption that the

<sup>63</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 8, 141a; see below, n. 65. Here Shalom is arguing on the assumption that the active intellect is the cause of the actualization of the human intellect.

<sup>64</sup>N. Sh. VIII, 10, 148a; "חכמי ישראל חזקו ונאצלו בזה הענין".

[illegible][illegible]

2515. Here Shalom is arguing on the assumption that the active intellect may be dispensed with as a cause of the actualization of the human intellect. The "secrets" (*sodot*) which are mentioned

as a cause of the actualization of the human intellect. The "secrets" (*sodot*) which are mentioned here may simply be the science of metaphysics, although they might also be a reference to some

There may simply be the science of metaphysics, although they might also be a reference to some kind of esoteric knowledge lying beyond the human science of metaphysics. Presumably as

synonymous with these *sodot*, Shalom also uses the expression *sive torah* (N. Sh. VIII, 9,

143b). Cf. M. N. I, 33, and Bacher, *Die Bibelepikergese Moses Mainmunt's*, pp. 12-14.

[illegible][illegible]

<sup>66</sup> Cf. above, pp. 82-83.



perish with the body; their functions can only "manifest themselves through corporeal organs" and therefore they perish when those organs perish.<sup>67</sup> But even the potentiality for thought, although it is not "essentially in need of a corporeal organ," cannot operate and cannot be realized after the body dies and sensation stops.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, should the potentiality for thought fail to be realized during the life of a body, the soul in question will remain completely empty after death. But an empty soul would be nothing at all. Therefore, although the soul was taken to be a substance which is not corporeal and which is hence capable of an existence apart from a body, in this case both it and its potentiality for thought would perish with the body;<sup>69</sup> no part of man would survive.

When, on the other hand, the power for thought is successfully realized and the entire soul is transformed into an acquired intellect, it has become an incorporeal substance consisting in pure thought,<sup>70</sup> and as such, it does not contain "any causes of corruption."<sup>71</sup> Consequently it is capable of remaining "immortal forever,"<sup>72</sup> though without its nonintellectual faculties, which can in no case survive the body. Since Shalom has reconstrued the acquired intellect as the soul itself when it has undergone its development, he does not hesitate to accept the statements of Maimonides and Gersonides, and describe the immortal aspect in man as the acquired intellect. For him, however, this means that what is immortal is not an acquired intellect "distinct (*mesholal*) from the substance of the soul,"<sup>73</sup> but the substance of the soul itself in its new guise of acquired intellect.<sup>74</sup>

By maintaining that it is the entire human soul which is immortal, Shalom feels that he has justified the traditional belief that nonintellectual activity can contribute to human immortality.<sup>75</sup> He gives no explicit statement of his reasoning; probably he means that since the human soul is originally something other than an intellect, nonintellectual factors can contribute to its development even though the product of the development will finally be a purely intellectual substance. Whatever Shalom's reasoning on that point, he does explicitly write that nonintellectual religious activity is indispensable if a soul is to reach the highest degree of immortality. This is stated when he distinguishes between two types of human immortality. The first type is that which, as already described, follows directly from the intellectual development which transforms the soul into an intellectual substance containing no causes of corruption.<sup>76</sup> Immortality attained in this way is termed "natural" immortality by Shalom because he understands that it follows automatically from the intellectual development of the soul, and because, further, the intellectual development of the soul is a natural process.<sup>77</sup> However, Shalom insists that

<sup>67</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 124a: והנחת שתראה פועלתם בכלים גופניים המה יאבדו באבדור הגוף.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*: לא אפשר לאדם אחר המות מהשיג מושכל: N. Sh. XI, 1, 190b: איננו צריך לכלי גופניים בעצם. The qualification *essentially* is intended to reflect the distinction drawn by Shalom above, n. 28.

<sup>69</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 124b: והוא ונושאו יפסד אם לא יצא לפועל יפסד הוא ונושאו.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. above, p. 79.

<sup>71</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 123b: הנהפסד: אחר שאין לה סבות ההפסד: Cf. M. H. I, 11, 82.

<sup>72</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 123b. See below, n. 74.

<sup>73</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 8, 140b: תהיה לשכל הנקנה שההשארות תהיה לשכל הנקנה. המשולל מעצם הנפש.

<sup>74</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 3, 123b: לעד תשאר לעד. השכל הנקנה תשאר לעד.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. N. Sh. VIII, 8, 140b.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. above, nn. 71, 74.

<sup>77</sup> N. Sh. XI, 5, 193b (*bis*): הנפש השלמה אחרי הפרדה מהגוף תשאר נצחית לסבות שניים. האחת: טבעית למה שאין לה סבות ההפסד מעצמה. והשנית אלהית ולמעלה מטבעה והיא קנותה השארות. . . . מצד השלמות שהשיגה מצד עיון התורה. . . . שהראשון עם היותו בלתי אפשר ההפסד הוא אפשר האפיסה וההפסד על צד העונש.



Divine immortality, besides being safer, is also a higher degree of immortality inasmuch as it leads to a higher degree of knowledge after death. This point is discussed in connection with the general problem whether the human soul can in fact add to its knowledge after the death of the body. Shalom found that among his predecessors there were opposing positions on the question, and he attempts a compromise:<sup>84</sup> Without the body, he writes, the soul cannot attain "absolutely new knowledge," since that must originate in the senses; but it can attain "partially new knowledge."<sup>85</sup> The explanation given for this is that the material element in each man is a "screen" (*masak*) which prevents the "apprehension of incorporeal divine things."<sup>86</sup> In death the screen falls away and the soul gains, if not completely new knowledge, at least a "fuller apprehension" of what was known in life.<sup>87</sup> However, that fuller apprehension is not, according to Shalom, enjoyed by souls which reach only the grade of natural immortality. Such souls remain with the "true thoughts which they had acquired during their life,"<sup>88</sup> contemplating them eternally, but they are unable to achieve "any additional knowledge."<sup>89</sup> Additional knowledge is restricted to souls which achieve specifically divine immortality and more particularly to those who achieve its highest grade, the "true immortality"

<sup>89</sup> N. Sh. XI, 1, 191a: לא תהיה לה יתרון השגה אחר המות . . . נפשם . . . האחרים



which results from a perfect and complete understanding and observance of the Law.<sup>90</sup> These souls are rewarded with the delight of the "upper paradise",<sup>91</sup> it is there that the deeper apprehension resulting from the removal of matter is described as opening into an intuition of "divine secrets," including nothing less than a vision of the "essence of God";<sup>92</sup> the last expression is probably not to be taken literally, however, in view of Shalom's denial elsewhere that man or even the incorporeal intelligences can know the essence of God.<sup>93</sup>

The additional knowledge after death that is enjoyed in "true" immortality is also, according to one passage, the factor which brings about resurrection. Without explaining just how one thing influences the other, Shalom writes that while the souls of those who achieve natural immortality do not perish, the knowledge which they acquired during life is "insufficient to resurrect them and restore them to a body a second time";<sup>94</sup> sufficient knowledge is possessed only by souls which gain true immortality through the observance of the Law.<sup>95</sup> Accordingly, Shalom declares that "resurrection belongs solely to the students of the Torah."<sup>96</sup>

The question whether a human soul retains its individuality when immortal arises in connection with the doctrine of Averroes,<sup>97</sup> concerning the "possibility of the conjunction" of the human intellect with the active intellect.<sup>98</sup> This is the doctrine that after the death of the body, the human intellect is "joined to the active intellect so that they become a single thing."<sup>99</sup> Shalom rejects it on the religious grounds that it implies a loss of individuality after death, while both Scripture and tradition<sup>100</sup> assume the human soul to be "individually immortal."<sup>101</sup> In support of the religious consideration, he also

<sup>90</sup> N. Sh. XI, 5, 194a: ההשארות האמתי לנפש אמנם ימצא בסבת התורה.

<sup>91</sup> N. Sh. XI, 6, 197a: ... ותשכיל שם מסוד הבורא יתברך והדברים האלהיים מה שאי אפשר לה להשיג בעזרה בגן עדן העליון ... ותשכיל שם מסוד הבורא יתברך והדברים האלהיים מה שאי אפשר לה להשיג בעזרה בחמר ... א"כ אנשי התורה יזכו לב' מיני תענוג בעה"ב ... וזה המין השני מהתענוג מסוגל לאנשי התורה לבד.

<sup>92</sup> N. Sh. XI, 5, 194a: הסודות האלהיות ודעתה ממהותו יתב'.

<sup>93</sup> See above, p. 37.

<sup>94</sup> N. Sh. XI, 1, 191a: האחרים עם שנפשם לא תפסד לפי שאין לה סבות ההפסד לפי שאינה חמרית. מכל מקום לא תהיה לה יתרון השגה אחר המות רק מה שהשיגה בחייה והשגה כזו לא תספיק להחיותה ולהשיגה בגוף פעם אחרת ולזה גורנו שתחיית המתים לאנשי התורה לבד.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. above, nn. 90-92.

<sup>96</sup> N. Sh. XI, 1, 191a. The Hebrew text is quoted in n. 94. When Shalom's statements concerning immortality are correlated the following scheme appears: (1) Souls which have studied and obeyed the Law perfectly gain "true immortality" which consists in an enjoyment of knowledge of the "secrets" concerning God, and which leads to resurrection. (2) Souls which have studied the Law imperfectly receive some lesser degree of the same type of immortality. (3) Souls which have developed intellectually attain the eternal contemplation of whatever degree of thought that they may have reached. (4) Souls which have undergone no intellectual development and have no religious merits are not immortal according to those statements of Shalom which best fit into his general system and which, consequently, we have used in our exposition. Once, however, Shalom expresses the view that even apart from any intellectual development, the human soul, being a spiritual substance, does not contain any causes of corruption in itself and hence is immortal by its very nature (N. Sh. XI, 5, 193b [bis]; Shalom, without indicating it, is quoting O. H. III, ii, 1, 70b). Even on this view the soul is not proof against a miraculous annihilation (N. Sh. XI, 4, 188b, after p. 193). (5) The souls of wicked men are punished by annihilation according to what Shalom represents as his own view. However, he allows the plausibility of another theory according to which wicked souls can partake of a lesser degree of immortality (N. Sh. XI, 4, 188b, after p. 193).

<sup>97</sup> Shalom describes it as the doctrine of "the philosopher."

<sup>98</sup> N. Sh. V, 8, 78b: מה שאמר הפילוסוף באיפשרות הדבקות. Shalom clearly has in mind Averroes' monograph known in Hebrew as *Ma'amar Efsharut ha-Debequt*; cf. above, n. 24.

<sup>99</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 145b: השוב הנפש בהדבקה לשכל הפועל הוא והיא דבר אחד ... וזה כפירה בחק התורה והקבלה האמתית.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> N. Sh. I, 7, 8a: יהיו קיימים באיש מצד הנפש.



produces a philosophic argument. The theory of "conjunction" rested on the assumption that matter is the only possible principle of individuation between things with the same essence, and the further assumption that the thought content, and hence the essence<sup>102</sup> of the human acquired intellect can reach a level where it becomes equivalent to the thought content and essence of the active intellect. The reasoning was that whenever an acquired intellect would reach this level, being immaterial there would be nothing to distinguish it from the immaterial active intellect. Shalom's objection consists in pointing out a principle of individuation which will apply even to immaterial beings with the same essence. Maimonides had maintained that such beings can be differentiated in the one case that they stand to one another in relation of cause and effect.<sup>103</sup> There were two respects in which the active intellect could be considered a cause of which the human intellect is the effect. First, according to the theory of the emanation of the various stages of the universe from God and from another one, the active intellect is the cause of the existence of the human intellect.<sup>104</sup> Secondly, as has just been seen, according to the consensus of philosophers at the time, the active intellect is the cause of actual human thought and, hence, of the appearance of the acquired intellect.<sup>105</sup> With these considerations in mind, Shalom contends that "just as it is impossible for an effect to turn into the substance of its cause, so it is impossible for the human soul to become unified with the active intellect."<sup>106</sup>

Instead of a conjunction with the active intellect, Shalom speaks of a "conjunction" of the human soul "with God."<sup>107</sup> He is very careful to point out, however, that he is only speaking in metaphorical terms. He really only means "that in achieving perfection through the Torah, it is vouchsafed man to resemble the angels and become an incorporeal substance like one of them."<sup>108</sup>

*Summary.*—The subject of the nature of the human soul and intellect presented Shalom with a greater challenge than the problems which have been examined earlier, for here there was no ready-made position which, he felt, could be adopted and defended. There were rather two theories, both of which seemed to him to contain a certain amount of truth: the view of Crescas that the human soul is a spiritual substance; and the theory presented by Maimonides and Gersonides, that while the human soul and the material intellect do not have the status of such a substance, the material intellect may eventually be replaced by a substantial acquired intellect. Shalom decides the issue by combining

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 7, 1072b, 20; M. N. I, 68, 100b; N. Sh. VIII, 7, 138b.

<sup>103</sup> M. N. II, introduction, proposition 16.

<sup>104</sup> It is the cause of the existence of the entire sublunar world as well. See above, p. 50.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. above, n. 16.

<sup>106</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 9, 145b: *אפשר שיהיו אחד כמו שאי אפשר לעולם*. Gersonides rejected the theory of "conjunction" on the grounds that the human intellect could never reach the point where its thought content would be identical with the thought of the active intellect (M. H. I, 12, 85-86), but he did retain the active intellect as a criterion for judging the state of each human acquired intellect; he explained that each person's perfection may be measured by the degree to which his intellect has been assimilated to the active intellect (M. H. I, 13, 90). This theory is also discussed and rejected by Shalom (N. Sh. VIII, 9, 145a; 10, 148a).

<sup>107</sup> N. Sh. V, 11, 82a: *הנפש האנושית תלויה בדבוקה באלוהים*.

<sup>108</sup> N. Sh. V, 8, 78b: *רק שתבין . . . באיפשרות הדבקות* . . . לא שתבין ממאמרי זה מה שאמר הפילוסוף באיפשרות הדבקות . . . Cf. O. H. III, iii, 1, 73a; II, vi, 1, 55a; Nahmanides, *Sha'ar ha-Gemul*, p. 19a; and for the concept in cabalistic literature, Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*<sup>3</sup>, p. 123.



the two positions. Like Crescas, he construes the human soul as a substance which is created apart from the body and joined to it at birth. The material intellect is, then, just the faculty in the human soul which represents the human potentiality for thought. When that potentiality for thought is realized, the entire human soul, already a "spiritual" substance, rises to the higher level of acquired intellect, the latter being nothing but the human soul itself in its developed, actualized state. At this point, which can be reached by a purely intellectual development, the human soul is immortal. But by asserting that it is the entire human soul which develops into an acquired intellect, Shalom feels that he can justify the value of nonintellectual activity as well. Accordingly he maintains that the practical aspect of the Jewish Law is a factor in the development of the soul, and, indeed, helps bring the soul in its guise of acquired intellect to an even higher state of immortality than exclusively intellectual development can achieve. Thus the philosophic theory of human intellect, as found in Maimonides and Gersonides, is retained in a modified form while the religious considerations which Crescas pressed are also accounted for. This entire formulation is presented by Shalom as the real view of Maimonides and Gersonides.

In working out the details of his basic position, Shalom allows himself a certain flexibility. He employs two alternative definitions of the soul as an incorporeal substance: According to one, the soul does not originally contain any actual human thought, while according to the other, it does. Paralleling these two definitions, he sets forth two alternative positions on the question whether the active intellect is the efficient cause which brings about the development of the human intellect: Usually he accepts that function of the active intellect, but he writes that it can be dispensed with by assuming the second definition of the soul, according to which the soul, even at birth, contains a certain amount of actual thought.<sup>109</sup> The reason that Shalom does not feel forced to choose between the two alternative positions on these questions is that he was more concerned with establishing a small number of general principles than with providing a precise statement of the philosophical details. The principles which concern him most are: (1) that the human soul is an incorporeal substance and hence is capable of immortality in its entirety; and, consequently, (2) that one of the factors contributing to the immortality of the soul is religious activity.

Besides these cases where Shalom employs differing theories without choosing between them, there are the interesting cases in which he accepts apparently divergent philosophic and religious doctrines on a given question but combines them into a single scheme. This tendency appears first when a theory of the soul as a spiritual substance is incorporated by him into the philosophic theory of intellect. It also appears when he states that the joint factors which bring about the intellectual development of the human soul are the philosophically conceived active intellect, and the religiously conceived divine revelation.<sup>110</sup> Most interestingly, Shalom's tendency to combine diverse elements appears in his harmonization of a philosophic and a religious theory of immortality. In order to preserve both the doctrine that immortality is gained through intellectual development, and the doctrine that it is imparted by Scripture, he explains that there are, in fact, two types of immortality, one consisting in the perpetuation of the thought which had been possessed

<sup>109</sup> Cf. above, pp. 84-85.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. above, p. 85.



by the soul in its corporeal life, the other consisting in the contemplation of divine secrets in the "upper paradise." It would seem as if the philosophers had defined the type of immortality which is reserved for themselves, while religious tradition had dealt with that which is reserved for students of Scripture. Significantly, the religious type of immortality is, for Shalom, superior to the philosophic type.

## CHAPTER VIII

# HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE, AND SCRIPTURE

SHALOM DOES not deal systematically with the problems of human epistemology, but he does occasionally repeat some commonplace statements on the subject. These statements take the form of lists of such aspects of human knowledge as its sources, the different levels of abstraction which take place between sense perception and intellectual thought, and the human sciences and their particular topics.

Three sources of knowledge are listed by Shalom with examples of the areas of knowledge which they give rise to. One source of knowledge is the "first notions."<sup>1</sup> These are the primary axioms of thought such as the axioms of mathematics and logic, and Shalom mentions the "demonstrations of geometry" to illustrate the body of knowledge which can be constructed upon this source.<sup>2</sup> As for the cause of the presence of the first notions in the human mind, Shalom states two alternative theories: Sometimes he repeats the Aristotelian view that they derive ultimately from the senses.<sup>3</sup> But elsewhere, he prefers the view that the soul is born possessing these first notions as innate ideas.<sup>4</sup> The second source of human knowledge is "sense perceptions,"<sup>5</sup> and includes "experience," the product of repeated sense perceptions.<sup>6</sup> The body of knowledge which is constructed upon this source of knowledge consists in the "physical demonstrations,"<sup>7</sup> that is, the science of physics. The third source of knowledge is "traditions," or knowledge gained indirectly from the report of a reliable witness who transmits his own sense perceptions.<sup>8</sup> An example is the knowledge on the part of those who have never traveled to the East, that "Jerusalem is a settled district."<sup>9</sup>

A second list produced by Shalom is intended to explain the manner in which a purely intellectual concept is refined out of sense perception. The process, Shalom explains,

<sup>1</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 86b: "... הקדמות שמהם יתחייב המושכל ההוא וזה אם מהמושכלות הראשונות ואם ... ההקדמות אשר יתחייב מהם המושכל" Cf. O. H. II, iv, 1, 41b: "... ההקדמות אשר יתחייב מהם המושכל" Cf. also Algazali, *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> N. Sh. I, 2, 1b: "שמופתי ההנדסה כלם בנויים על המושכלות הראשונות" Cf. *Millot ha-Higgayon*, chap. 8.

<sup>3</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 7, 139a: "... שהחוש יאמתם" Cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II, 19, 100b, 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 10, 147b: "דעתי ... שהיא משכלת המושכלות הראשונות בלי למוד רק מצד טבע" Cf. above, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 86b. Cf. above, n. 1.

<sup>6</sup> N. Sh. XIII, 2, 212a: "האמות הבא מהחוש כולל מה שיאמתהו חוש הראות והנסיון כי גם הוא יקרא חוש" Cf. *Posterior Analytics* II, 19, 100a, 3-6, where experience is described as the product of memories of sense perceptions of the same thing.

<sup>7</sup> N. Sh. I, 2, 1b: "המופתיים הטבעיים בנויים על המוחשות" Cf. *Millot ha-Higgayon*, chap. 8.

<sup>8</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 86b; cf. above n. 1. The first notions would hardly be a subject for tradition.

<sup>9</sup> N. Sh. I, 2, 1b: "הנמשכות כידעתנו שירשלם ארץ מיושבת בעולם" Shalom adds that the reliability of tradition depends on the number of witnesses (*ibid.*).







... physics, . . . and metaphysics.”<sup>17</sup> In different passages he also states the subject matter and subdivisions of these theoretical sciences. Physics, he writes, deals with “changeable body”;<sup>18</sup> and he identifies the subdivisions of physical science by listing the Aristotelian and pseudo-Aristotelian works which deal with them: *Physics*, *De Caelo*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *Meteorologica*, *De Mineralibus*, *De Plantis*, *Historia Animalium*, *De Anima*.<sup>19</sup> Mathematics was generally regarded as containing four subdivisions.<sup>20</sup> Three of them, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, are referred to by Shalom as: (a) the part of mathematics which deals with “number”;<sup>21</sup> (b) the part that deals with “abstract distances”;<sup>22</sup> and (c) the part that deals with such topics as “knowledge of the form of the spheres,”<sup>23</sup> their measurement, the direction of their movement, the time of the revolution of each.”<sup>24</sup> In opposition to some writers who had accredited astrology by the side of astronomy,<sup>25</sup> Shalom is careful to deny that true astronomy has anything to do with “what the stupid astrologers believe.”<sup>26</sup> The subject matter of metaphysics, the third theoretical science, is said by Shalom to include: “being *qua* being, its attributes, properties and parts,”<sup>27</sup> as well as “the incorporeal intelligences, divine attributes, and the existence of God.”<sup>28</sup> Metaphysics is further described as dealing with such problems of religious philosophy as “creation, divine government of the universe, God’s providence, will and knowledge, . . . and prophecy.”<sup>29</sup>

These various aspects of human knowledge are touched upon by Shalom only casually. He deals more systematically with prophecy which he represents as constituting an entire parallel system of human knowledge. The actual occurrence of the prophetic experience is taken for granted by Shalom, and his only concern is to define the nature of the ex-

<sup>17</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 2, 99a: מושכל הלאהיות מעולים וכן מושכל הטבעיות בשבח ממושכל הטבעיות. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* I, 1, 403b, 11-16; *Metaphysics* VI, 1, 1026a, 18-19. In the present passage Shalom notes that in respect to the dignity of the three sciences, mathematics stands between physics and metaphysics. Elsewhere he states that from the point of view of the correct order of taking up the sciences, mathematics should come before both physics and metaphysics (N. Sh. VI, 7, 96b; cf. M. N. I, 34, 53b). On the whole question, see H. A. Wolfson, “The Classification of Sciences in Medieval Jewish Philosophy,” *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume* (Cincinnati, 1925), pp. 285-287.

<sup>18</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 9, 106b: הגשם המשתנה הטבע שנושא הגשם המושכל. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI, 1, 1026a, 13-14.

<sup>19</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74b-75a. *De Mineralibus* and *De Plantis* are spurious. For this method of enumerating the topics of physical science, cf. Wolfson, “The Classification of Sciences . . .,” *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume*, pp. 296-297.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen* II, 2<sup>4</sup>, 177, n. 1; M. de Wulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy* (New York, 1952), I, 53; Wolfson, “The Classification of Sciences . . .,” *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume*, pp. 263, 300.

<sup>21</sup> N. Sh. VI, 7, 96b: המרחקים המופשטים מחמר והמנין.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* I, 1, 403b, 14-15.

<sup>23</sup> This presumably means the *shape* of the sphere, although it might also refer to the theory that the spheres do not consist of the same form and matter of which things in the lower world consist; cf. above, pp. 49-50.

<sup>24</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74b: הלכך כל אחד סובב וזמן סובב ודרך הלכך ומדתם ודרך הלכך. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI, 1, 1026a, 18-19.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Wolfson, “The Classification of Sciences . . .,” *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume*, pp. 303-304.

<sup>26</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 74b. The Hebrew is quoted in n. 24. Cf. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, H. Teshubah V, 4.

<sup>27</sup> N. Sh. V, 7, 75a: . . . ומשיגיו וחלקותיו. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI, 1, 1026a, 31-32.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*: יבנס בזה ידיעת השכלים הנבדלים וידיעת תארי האל ומציאותו. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI, 1, 1026a, 10.

<sup>29</sup> N. Sh. VII, i, 2, 99a: השגחתו לעולם ואיך השגחתו לזולתו וענין. These would be problems which cannot be exhausted by human science and for which, therefore, one must have recourse to revelation; cf. above, pp. 8, 85 and below, p. 99.



perience and to discover the manner in which it can provide man with true information. His statements on the nature of the prophetic experience repeat the views of both Maimonides and Crescas almost verbatim, despite some divergencies between those two writers.

In the theory presented by Maimonides the nature of prophecy is explained in terms of the general theory of intellect which Maimonides had accepted.<sup>30</sup> He explained that three distinct cognitive phenomena are produced by the single emanation that proceeds from the active intellect,<sup>31</sup> the character of each of the three depending upon the way in which that emanation is received in the human soul. The first of these phenomena is the actualization of the human intellect which gives rise to the class of "learned men"; it is brought about when the emanation from the active intellect is received exclusively by a well-developed human rational faculty.<sup>32</sup> The second phenomenon is "true dream" and it results when the emanation from the active intellect flows solely upon the imaginative faculty of the soul; this occurs among men who have developed their imaginative faculty but neglected their reason.<sup>33</sup> The third phenomenon is prophecy and it results when the emanation from the active intellect flows first upon the rational faculty of the soul and then also upon the imaginative faculty. This occurs among men who have qualified themselves by developing both of those faculties and who, in addition, have the moral virtue which is necessary to control their passions and free their attention for higher matters.<sup>34</sup> Although prophecy would thus be produced directly by the active intellect, it was still possible for Maimonides to ascribe its origin to God inasmuch as the emanation from the active intellect which produces it could be traced back to the deity as its ultimate source.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, in Maimonides' formal definition, prophecy is described as "an emanation from God, through the medium of the active intellect, flowing first upon the rational faculty and then upon the imaginative faculty."<sup>36</sup>

The entire scheme is repeated by Shalom. Following Maimonides, Shalom explains that the emanation from the active intellect produces three separate phenomena: When it flows "solely upon the rational faculty," it produces "the class of learned men."<sup>37</sup> When it flows "solely upon the imaginative faculty" it produces what Shalom calls "providential dream."<sup>38</sup> But if it should "flow upon both the rational and imaginative faculties," it produces the "class of prophets."<sup>39</sup> According to this conception, certain qualifications must be satisfied before a man might attain the prophetic state. Shalom specifies those qualifications when he quotes Maimonides to the effect that the candidate for prophecy must possess three "perfections": "perfection of the rational faculty through study; perfection of the imaginative faculty in its constitution; and perfection in morals through

<sup>30</sup> Cf. above, pp. 79-80.

<sup>31</sup> M. N. II, 37, 80b.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, cf. above, p. 80.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 80a-b; II, 36, 76b.

<sup>34</sup> M. N. II, 36, 78a-b; 37, 80b.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. above, pp. 45-46.

<sup>36</sup> M. N. II, 36, 76a: "באמצעות השכל הפועל על ית' באמצעות מאת השם ית' הכה הדברי תחלה ואחר כך ישפע על כח המדמה

שהוא השפע השכלי כשיהיה שופע על הכה הדברי לבד ולא ישפע ממנו דבר על: N. Sh. VI, 4, 91b: "הכח המדמה . . . זהו כח החכמים בעלי העיון

שבנבואה היתה שפעה על הכה הדברי ואח"כ על המדמה והחלום המשולח: N. Sh. VI, 5, 93b: "מההשגחה יהיה על הכה המדמה לבד

וכשיהיה השפע ההוא על הדברי והמדמה יחד על תכלית שלמותם ביצירה זהו כח: N. Sh. VI, 4, 91b: "הנביאים Cf. above, n. 38.



elimination of the thought of all pleasure."<sup>40</sup> These being the qualifications for prophecy, it further follows that the relative superiority (*yitron*) of one prophet over another would be determined by the different degree in which the necessary qualifications are realized.<sup>41</sup> And so, referring to one of the three qualifications, Shalom writes that the "relative superiority" (*yitron*) in a person's "prophetic comprehension" will be proportional to his "level in science," that is, to the development of his intellectual faculty.<sup>42</sup> In a definition which summarizes this overall conception, Shalom describes the "true essence of prophecy as an "emanation from God, through the active intellect, upon the [human imagination and] rational faculty."<sup>43</sup>

The theory which is thus repeated by Shalom from Maimonides was criticized by Crescas, who objected mainly to the tendency to make prophecy virtually a natural phenomenon. The emanation from the active intellect which was described as giving rise to prophecy was understood by Maimonides to be present at all times, as part of the natural order of the universe.<sup>44</sup> If it should further be assumed that the emanation is received by every soul which possesses the proper qualifications, prophecy would be simply a natural and automatic concomitant of a certain stage of human development: Anyone who could fulfill the qualifications would receive the emanation in the rational and imaginative faculties of his soul and would immediately prophesy.<sup>45</sup> This, according to Maimonides, was in fact the general position of secular philosophy.<sup>46</sup> Maimonides himself, however, added one further condition in order to render prophecy subject to the will of God. He maintained that while by the ordinary course of events everyone who fulfills the three qualifications would receive the gift of prophecy automatically, God can still exclude whomever He will by a sort of miraculous veto;<sup>47</sup> the veto would have to operate as a kind of miracle since it would be an intervention in the natural order of the universe.

It is this last point in Maimonides' position that Crescas regarded as the weak link. Taking as granted that prophecy is restricted to the people of Israel, Crescas argued that it would be too much to expect that God had always performed the miracle of depriving every qualified gentile of the prophetic gift.<sup>48</sup> The difficulty is only to be avoided, according to Crescas, by maintaining that prophecy is not the result of the same emanation which produces intellectual phenomena, but is rather the result of a different emanation

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*: ההבדל האמתי לנביא שיבדילוהו מהחכם הוא שלמות הכח הדברי בלמוד ושלמות הכח המדמה בכלל התענוגים ביצירה ושלמות המדות בבטול המחשבה בכלל התענוגים.

<sup>41</sup> M. N. II, 36, 78b.

<sup>42</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 88b: כפי מעלת האיש בחכמה תהיה יתרון השגתו בנבואה.

<sup>43</sup> N. Sh. X, 9, 188b: אמנת הנבואה ומהותה שפע שופע מאתו יתברך מהשכל הפועל על הכח הדברי. Shalom represents this definition as a quotation from Maimonides (cf. above, n. 36) and therefore I have supplied the words "human imagination." If the omission were due to Shalom and were deliberate, it could only reflect the belief that the presence of the imagination would demean prophecy. This was not, however, Shalom's position; cf. N. Sh. VI, 1, 88b-89a, and below, n. 62.

In other passages Shalom also follows Maimonides in distinguishing eleven separate grades of prophecy and in placing the prophecy of Moses outside of this whole scheme. Cf. N. Sh. VI, 4, 91a; M. N. II, 45; 35, 74a; 36, 79a.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. M. N. II, 18, 37a.

<sup>45</sup> Thus prophecy would parallel human immortality, both resulting automatically from a certain stage of intellectual development; cf. above, p. 86.

<sup>46</sup> M. N. II, 32, 66b-67a.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 67b.

<sup>48</sup> O. H. II, iv, 4, 46a. Crescas does not explain why this is an unacceptable assumption. Perhaps he means that since a miracle is an only occasional break in the order of nature (cf. M. N. II, 29, 56a-b) one cannot assume a law of nature which is continually being broken.



which follows a different principle.<sup>49</sup> The qualifications for receiving this other, higher emanation are defined by Crescas as "cleaving to God" and "continually isolating oneself in divine worship," conditions which can be satisfied only under the direction of Scripture as the Jews study it.<sup>50</sup> Thus the restriction of prophecy to the Jews would be explained by the fact that only Jews could ever be in a position to fulfill the necessary qualifications.

In passages which appear side by side with those in which he repeats Maimonides' position, Shalom, curiously, also accepts Crescas' criticism of it. Quoting Crescas with approval, he writes: "Maimonides accepted the philosophers' view of prophecy and just added the possibility that someone who is qualified for prophecy may fail to prophesy, if God so will, as the result of a sort of miracle. . . . But it seems strange that the miracle would have occurred continuously among the learned men of all nations outside of Israel";<sup>51</sup> however, on Maimonides' theory this supposition would be necessary since both Scripture and history show prophecy to be a "peculiar property" of Israel, appearing among gentiles "only by accident."<sup>52</sup> Consequently, the more "correct"<sup>53</sup> view, Shalom now maintains, is that prophecy results from a "higher"<sup>54</sup> emanation than the emanation which produces intellectual phenomena. The person who is qualified to receive the higher emanation is now described as the one who "cleaves to God and continually isolates himself in divine worship."<sup>55</sup> Any intellectual qualification is satisfied by studying, not the "science of the Greek,"<sup>56</sup> but Scripture. And finally, the level achieved by any given prophet is made to depend upon his achievements, not in Greek philosophy, but in "the theory of the Torah and its commandments."<sup>57</sup>

Although Shalom quotes Crescas' criticism of Maimonides with approval, the manner in which he repeats Maimonides' view does not at all suggest that he considers it incorrect. It would seem that Shalom regarded the positions of Maimonides and Crescas as two alternatives. The former recommended itself simply by having been held by Maimonides, while the other recommended itself by appearing closer to Shalom's conception of the traditional belief in prophecy.

Shalom gives particular attention to the question whether prophecy can provide knowledge in the strict sense of the term. According to an accepted Aristotelian definition, scientific knowledge occurs only when the causes of a fact are known as well as the fact

<sup>49</sup> O. H. II, iv, 1, 41b.

<sup>50</sup> O. H. II, iv, 4, 46a.

<sup>51</sup> N. Sh. VI, 2, 89b, quoting O. H. II, iv, 4, 46a: הרב . . . שאמר . . . והנה צדק הר' חסדאי במה שאמר . . . קיים דעתם אלא שיוסיף שאשר יוכן לנבואה יעבור שלא יתנבא ברצון הש"י וזה אצלו כדמות הנפלאות . . . אמנם עדיין יפלא איך התמיד הפלא הזה בכלם ר"ל בחכמי הגוים. כאשר נביא הדעת האמתי כמו שאמרנו לא יהיה מקום לפלא הזה . . . עד כאן לשון החכם והוא הראוי שיאמן לפי התורה.

<sup>52</sup> N. Sh. V, 1, 61a: הנבואה סגולה נמצאת בישראל לבד; VI, 2, 89b: א"א שתמצא לזולתם בעת. מהעתים רק במקרה. That prophecy was limited to the Jewish people seems to have been Maimonides' position, for he placed Balaam, the greatest of the gentile prophets, in the second lowest grade of prophet, which he described as involving something less than prophecy in the strict sense; cf. M. N. II, 45, 91b. Elsewhere Shalom states that the Land of Israel also plays a special role in prophecy; cf. N. Sh. VII, ii, 6, 114b, and the similar positions of Hallevi, *Cuzari* II, 14, and Nahmanides, *Sha'ar ha-Gemul*, p. 17b. Also cf. above, p. 75, n. 89.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. above, n. 51.

<sup>54</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 88b: השופע על הנביא הוא במדרגה עליונה מהשופע על החכם.

<sup>55</sup> N. Sh. VI, 2, 89b: המוכן אל השלמות הזה הוא הדבק בו והמתבודד תמיד בעבודתו; cf. O. H. II, iv, 4, 46a.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*: באמרם ז"ל אין הנבואה שורה אלא על חכם אין הכונה בחכמת היוני. Cf. above, p. 3, n. 17.

<sup>57</sup> N. Sh. VI, 3, 90a: מעלת הנביא בנבואה תהיה כפי אופן ההשכלה וההשגה ששיגי מעיון התורה. ומצותיה . . . וזוה יתחלפו מדרגות הנביאים בלי ספק.



itself,<sup>58</sup> or, in other words, when the conclusion of a syllogism is known as proceeding from premises which are also known to be true. If, on the other hand, a person should make even a correct theoretical judgment without knowing its premises, he was held to possess only opinion, not true knowledge.<sup>59</sup> Shalom now asks whether the prophet is also subject to this rule so that he too has scientific knowledge only when he knows truths in conjunction with the premises from which they proceed. Maimonides, Shalom finds, held that prophecy can produce knowledge without prior, or even concurrent, knowledge of premises,<sup>60</sup> while Gersonides held that it cannot.<sup>61</sup> It is the former position which Shalom himself defends.

He argues that premises must be known only because man happens to be unable to know scientific propositions immediately. Before making a judgment human reason has to proceed through a series of steps or premises. If any of the steps should be omitted, the conclusion is not certain, and therefore cannot be said to constitute knowledge in the strict sense. On the other hand, if theoretical propositions could be known immediately, they could be known without knowledge of their premises. And just that, according to Shalom is possible for the prophet: He learns immediately and directly what the scientist knows only through deduction, and, consequently, unlike the scientist he can have true and certain knowledge even when he dispenses with premises. This notion is expressed by Shalom in two ways. First, he explains that it is the imagination which "enables the prophet to know some things without knowing their causes."<sup>62</sup> When the imagination is associated with reason in a prophetic experience, all of the intermediate steps through which reason must usually pass may be overleaped, for the imagination presents truths to the prophet "as if he apprehended them with his senses."<sup>63</sup> In a second attempt to explain the same point, Shalom writes that truths which cannot be learned through the ordinary processes of human thought are available through prophecy because the latter results from a "higher" emanation.<sup>64</sup> He means that in natural knowledge, the emanation from the active intellect which enables a man to attain each new stage of knowledge<sup>65</sup> only becomes available when the man has already reached the immediately prior stage. But the higher emanation which causes prophecy can be vouchsafed to a man even though no such preparative stage has previously been reached.

Two general areas which can be known through prophecy without prior knowledge of premises are distinguished by Shalom. First, he writes, truths may be revealed which are also capable of being demonstrated scientifically, but whose "causes and premises" the prophet did not happen to know before he began to prophesy.<sup>66</sup> In this case, the prophet does not remain in any way inferior to his philosophic counterpart, because through

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* I, 2, 71b, 9-11.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. M. H. II, 4, 101, quoted by Shalom, N. Sh. VI, 1, 88a-b.

<sup>60</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 87b-88b, with reference to M. N. II, 38, 82a-b.

<sup>61</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 88a-89a, with reference to M. H. II, 4, 101. According to Gersonides, the function of prophecy is to aid the prophet in drawing conclusions from premises which he already knows; cf. *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>62</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 88b-89a: *אם כן שלמות המדמה בעקר היצירה ישמש לנביא להשכילו השגות מה אף בנזול סבות ואם נודעו בעיון מצד סבותיהם*.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 88b: *הנביא כאלו השיג הדבר בחושם*. Shalom is quoting M. N. II, 38, 82a, where it is not theoretical truths but only predictions of the future which the prophet's imaginative faculty is said to represent as if perceived by sense perception.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. above, n. 54. This explanation is made in accordance with Crescas' theory of prophecy.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. above, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> N. Sh. VI, 1, 89a: *הנביא תגיע לו ההודעה בדרוש מה עם ידיעת סבות אותו הדרוש אם יהיו לו סבות והתחלות ואע"פ שמתחלה יוכל הנביא סבות אותו המושכל*.







a code of human ethics.<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, they will correspond to another part of the second area of knowledge revealed by prophecy, the ideal code of human behavior. Thus he has stated that all of the general types of knowledge which can be revealed by prophecy are actually present in Scripture. The only variety of knowledge which he says is revealed by prophecy, but which he does not formally include among the parts of Scripture in the present list, is made up of the particular cases of the prediction of future events. This omission does not mean that Shalom denies that predictions are recorded in Scripture. It only means that he does not regard them as one of the main constituents.

Although the human theoretical sciences may be discovered, according to Shalom, by the unaided human intellect, as well as revealed through prophecy, he follows the view that they were first made public to mankind by "the sages of the Torah,"<sup>81</sup> presumably, that is, under the guidance of prophetic revelation and Scripture. He further maintains that Scripture presents these sciences in a "more perfect" or, in other words, a more accurate form than the unaided human intellect can attain.<sup>82</sup> The theoretical sciences are described as appearing in Scripture either "explicitly or implicitly."<sup>83</sup> That is, apart from the very few demonstrable principles, such as the existence of God, which are stated explicitly, the "totality"<sup>84</sup> of the theoretical sciences is implied in one way or another in various statements of Scripture. The implicit doctrines are to be brought to light by what Shalom calls the method of "Torah study" (*limmud toriyyi*), contrasted by him with "scientific study" (*limmud madda'i*).<sup>85</sup> "Torah study" presumably uses what he elsewhere

<sup>80</sup> (a) According to Aristotle, moral virtue depends upon "correct appetite" (*ὁρεξις*; *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 2, 1139a, 24), and Maimonides therefore wrote that the appetitive faculty of the soul is, together with the sensitive faculty, responsible for moral virtue (*Shemonah Peraqim*, chap. 2). However Maimonides also stated that these two faculties are responsible for the observance of religious commandments and prohibitions, the assumption presumably being that religious commandments and prohibitions have the object of teaching moral virtue (*ibid.*). The latter statement is reproduced by Shalom on, we may suppose, the same assumption. He writes that it is in the "sensitive and appetitive faculties" that the observance of "religious commandments and prohibitions is to be found" (N. Sh. X, 3, 175a: *מהנפש והם הכח המרגיש והמתעורר כמו שכתב הרמב"ם*).

(b) Maimonides wrote that Scripture has as its object the inculcation of three things: "morals," "beliefs," and the "practices" or behavior necessary in human society. Shalom describes these three as the three parts of human ethics, thus indicating that ethics and Scripture have the same object. He writes that ethics is concerned with the "improvement (*tiqqun*) of the soul in morals, in beliefs, and in the correctness of actions and the scriptural commandments" (N. Sh. V, 7, 72b: *הנהגתו עם הנפש תחלק לג' חלקים אם בתקון נפשו במדות אם בדעות אם ביושר הפעולות והמצוות התורניות*). Shalom has just substituted the practices involved in performing religious rites for the practices and behavior necessary in society, in accordance with his belief that the very performance of religious rites has a value in itself, (N. Sh. V, 3, 64a).

(c) Paraphrasing Abraham Ibn Ezra, Shalom writes that there are three types of religious commandment: "those dependent on the mouth, on the heart, and on practice" (N. Sh. X, 3, 175a-b: *המצוות בחלוקת לג' חלקים מצוות תלויות בפה ומהם בלב ומהם במעשה*); although Shalom is clearly paraphrasing *Yesod Mora*, chap. 7 (Jerusalem, 1931), p. 10, and even uses the same proof text, Deut. 30: 14, he does not indicate his source. In another passage Shalom recasts this list of types of religious commandment as a list of types of human perfection or virtue; the assumption obviously is that Scripture inculcates the different types of human perfection or virtue. Shalom writes that "intellectual thought, action, and speech" are the three things in which a "man must be perfect" (N. Sh. V, 7, 77a: *צריך שיהיה האדם שלם בשלושה אלה*).

On the notion that virtue is taught by Scripture, cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, II, 303 ff. . . .  
<sup>81</sup> N. Sh. II, 9, 39a: *כל מה שידעו החכמים אמנם ידעו זה באמצעות חכמי תורתנו*. For the theory, cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 141; 160-163. Shalom's source may have been Hallevi, *Cuzari* II, 66.

<sup>82</sup> N. Sh. VIII, 10, 148a: *התורה הזו הכוללת כל המושכלות באופן יותר שלם*.

<sup>83</sup> N. Sh. V, 5, 66b: *האלהית מתורתנו . . . בפירוש*.  
<sup>84</sup> See above, n. 82. Shalom refers to an expression of the same theory by Nahmanides, commentary on the Pentateuch, introduction.

<sup>85</sup> N. Sh. XI, 1, 189b: *או ברמז*.

<sup>86</sup> See above, n. 82. Shalom refers to an expression of the same theory by Nahmanides, commentary on the Pentateuch, introduction.

<sup>87</sup> N. Sh. XI, 1, 189b: *העיון יבחן בשתי בחינות אם מצד הלמוד התורני אם מצד הלמוד המדעי*.



calls the "Torah syllogism" (*heqqesh toriyyi*).<sup>86</sup> This would be a kind of inference from, and systematization of different passages in Scripture. In the case where Shalom himself employs a "Torah syllogism" he examines various scriptural passages referring to individual prophets, and infers from them the general rule that prophecy was concentrated among the Hebrews and appeared among other nations only "accidentally."<sup>87</sup>

Shalom is careful to anticipate the question why the "sages of the Torah," who have been identified as the original teachers of science, have now lost that distinction. He explains that after theoretical science was made public by the Jews, it was soon mastered by the philosophers.<sup>88</sup> Then, "because of the length of the exile," science, or rather the method of extracting it from Scripture, "was forgotten among the Jews." As a result, the philosophers were able to conceal their indebtedness and, unfairly, began to "represent science as their own."<sup>89</sup>

*Summary.*—The most important point made by Shalom in the passages which have been examined in the present chapter concerns the relationship between human knowledge and prophecy. Shalom maintains that prophecy is a direct means for informing man, first, of all the truths which ordinarily can be reached only by gradual processes of reasoning, and then, of religious truths and ethical doctrines which cannot be learned by those processes. Since only a few men can enjoy prophecy in their own persons, most have access to it solely through Scripture, which preserves the reports of the prophets. Accordingly, having maintained that prophecy is a source both of human science and of knowledge which lies beyond it, Shalom also states that both of these can be learned from Scripture. Taken together, therefore, prophecy and Scripture would comprise a system of revealed knowledge by the side of ordinary human knowledge. They parallel the other sources of human knowledge so far as they teach theoretical science, but go beyond in informing man of the truths which are not accessible through the ordinary processes of thought.

<sup>86</sup> N. Sh. VI, 2, 89b. For similar expressions see Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, s.v. *tori*.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*; cf. above, n. 52.

<sup>88</sup> N. Sh. II, 9, 39a.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*: לאורך גלותינו נשתכח ממנו ההכמה ויחסרה להם. The notion that the exile affected the wisdom of the Jews is borrowed by Shalom from Maimonides, M. N. I, 71, 107a-b.



## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

IT CAN HARDLY be claimed that Shalom was an original thinker, and his achievements must therefore have less interest for their own sake than for the cultural index which they provide. They throw light, specifically, on the state of philosophic studies among the Jews of fifteenth-century Spain. Together with the community of southern France, the Spanish Jewish community had been the center of such studies, but, as Shalom himself testifies, a severe cultural decline had by now set in. While only limited conclusions can be drawn from individual examples, Shalom does at least reveal that it was yet possible to acquire a fairly complete philosophic education. He possessed knowledge of all of the theories which could still be regarded seriously, and the ability adeptly to operate, if not create, with his knowledge. The fact that he could achieve the level that he did, may be taken as an indication that the momentum of the earlier culture had, in some degree, carried over into the period of decline.

What we have called Shalom's philosophic education comprises elements from several traditions. Shalom's main source, as has been seen, was the system of Maimonides. But through Maimonides, Averroes, and their successors, he also was familiar with, and employed true Aristotelian philosophy, the general themes of medieval religious philosophy, and the Arabic Aristotelian variety of the latter. The basic trend of his thought is, naturally enough, that of the medieval philosophers in general. Most fundamental in this respect is his assumption that prophecy and revealed Scripture are legitimate sources of human knowledge, and that unaided human reason should be subordinated to revelation.<sup>1</sup> Also typical of medieval philosophy are the recognition of a general problem of divine attributes,<sup>2</sup> the view that the creation of the world is a fundamental principle of religion,<sup>3</sup> and the attempt to prove that divine omniscience does not interfere with human free will.<sup>4</sup> Most of the particular theories which Shalom employs may be traced to genuine Aristotelian philosophy or to medieval Arabic Aristotelianism. Thus he cites Aristotle's proof of the existence of a first cause of the motion of the universe;<sup>5</sup> the basic elements of the Aristotelian psychology<sup>6</sup> and physics;<sup>7</sup> the arguments, most significant in the Middle Ages, for the "unmixed," incorporeal nature of the human intellect,<sup>8</sup> and for the existence of an active intellect which causes the actualization of the human intellect;<sup>9</sup> finally, the so-called Aristotelian classification of sciences.<sup>10</sup> From the Arabic Aristotelians

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 8, 85, 99. Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 155-158.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chap. III. Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, II, 154-157.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 63-64. Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 322-324.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 71-73. Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 461.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 78, n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> See above, pp. 52-53.

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 80, n. 16.

<sup>10</sup> See above, pp. 93-94.



he draws the new proof of the existence of God based on the distinction between necessary and possible existence;<sup>11</sup> the interpretation of Aristotle as believing that there is a first cause of the existence, as well as the motion, of the universe;<sup>12</sup> the assumption that neither the eternity nor creation of the world is absolutely demonstrable;<sup>13</sup> a scheme of the structure of the universe;<sup>14</sup> the identification of the active intellect as the lowest of the celestial intelligences;<sup>15</sup> and the theory, grown out of remarks of Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias, that the human intellect develops into an acquired intellect which is then capable of immortality.<sup>16</sup> Maimonides provided Shalom with a framework for approaching the various problems of religious philosophy and this framework is discernible both when we consider Shalom's formal philosophic discussions, and those topics where his views must be reconstructed from occasional remarks. The main lines of Maimonides' analysis have been shown to underlie his references to the proofs of the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God;<sup>17</sup> the proper and improper interpretations of divine attributes;<sup>18</sup> the creation of the world;<sup>19</sup> and the difference between divine knowledge and human knowledge.<sup>20</sup> In other, more minor points Shalom has been seen to employ Gersonides and Crescas.

Although the latter half of the fifteenth century is the period in which conventional dating places the expiration of the Middle Ages, the following century and a half saw a revival of scholastic philosophy in Spain and Portugal. There is no reason to doubt that the Jews would also have continued to pursue their philosophic studies had they been allowed to remain in the peninsula under fairly tolerable conditions. The glimpse which Shalom and several contemporaries<sup>21</sup> provide of the state of those studies on the eve of the expulsion suggests what their future might have been: The authoritative sources, particularly Maimonides, would probably have been studied assiduously, and the old familiar problems would have been reworked in the traditional way. As it was, the end of medieval Jewish philosophy was made to concur with the conventional end of the European Middle Ages only adventitiously, by the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. The Jewish branch of medieval philosophy, unlike the Moslem and Christian branches, was not in its chief centers allowed to fulfill its term, but, for better or worse, died an unnatural death.

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 56; but cf p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 58. Cf. Wolfson, "Theories of Creation in Hallevi and Maimonides," *Essays in honour of . . . J. H. Hertz*, p. 429.

<sup>14</sup> See above, Chap. IV.

<sup>15</sup> See above, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> See above, pp. 83-84.

<sup>17</sup> See above, Chap. II.

<sup>18</sup> See above, pp. 31-39.

<sup>19</sup> See above, Chap. V.

<sup>20</sup> See above, pp. 69-71.

<sup>21</sup> As Shem Tob ben Joseph Ibn Shem Tob, Isaac Arama, and Isaac Abravanel.



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